

Faith & Reason

Ayatullah Mahdi Hadavi Tehrani

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Faith and Reason

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point

A Compendium of Fifty Questions and Answers Related to Islamic Theology, Jurisprudence and Other ThemesAnswers to a series of questions often asked by young Muslims growing up in Western societies. The questions are on diverse topics ranging from Divine will, marriage, the role of women and the ١٢th Imam.

Foreword

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

By Hasnain Walji

Islam espouses an enlightened mind and hence, it has been termed as the path of knowledge. In the Qur`an the number of verses in which 'ilm (knowledge) or its derivatives and associated words are used is ٧٠۴. The aids of knowledge such as the book, pen, ink, etc. amount to almost the same number while other words associated with writing occur in ٣١٩ verses.(١)

By responding to the call of the Qur`an to ponder over creation in order to understand the greatness of Allah (awj) and reflecting this honored the pursuit of

knowledge, considered a meritorious duty, Muslim scholars have amply .demonstrated that knowledge elevates the sincere seeker

(ع) In response to a person who posed him a difficult question, Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib ,said: “Ask in order to understand, and do not ask in order to find fault

p: ١

Dr. Sayyid Wahid Akhtar, The Islamic Concept of Knowledge, al-Tawhid, vol. xii, no. -١ ٣

for surely the ignorant man who wants to learn resembles a man of knowledge, and surely a man of knowledge who wants to be difficult resembles an ignorant man who wants to find fault."In response to a person who posed him a difficult question, Imam said: "Ask in order to understand, and do not ask in order to find (ع) 'Ali b. Abi Talib fault, for surely the ignorant man who wants to learn resembles a man of knowledge, and surely a man of knowledge who wants to be difficult resembles an ignorant man ".who wants to find fault

This then should be the spirit of inquiry as we are faced with many challenges in this day and age. In particular, young Muslims growing up in Western societies are crying out for rational and convincing explanations in matters of their faith. In schools and colleges they are confronted by their peers as much as professors, who engage them on debates about reason and faith - in particular, whether faith is a valid means for .acquiring knowledge or the limits of reason in explaining one's faith

This book, aptly named 'Faith and Reason – A Compendium of Fifty Questions and Answers Related to Islamic Theology, Jurisprudence and Other Themes' is timely, in .offering some explanations

The questions on such diverse topics as Divine Will and Human Will, free choice Allah's (awj) Will in human as well as Angels and free-will give enlightening answers. In ,(ع) particular, questions relating to Imam al-Mahdi

address issues such as his marriage, place of residence, as well the role of women in the government of Imam al-Mahdi's (ع) and the possibility of a decline in Imam al-Mahdi's (ع) government.

It is hoped that this latest offering by the Islamic Education Board of the World Federation will enhance the readers' understanding of some critical and relevant issues, which are rarely discussed in general.

As Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) has said: "The man of knowledge is the one who recognizes that what is known is very little compared to what is not known, and as a result he considers himself ignorant, and accordingly he increases his efforts to know more by going out in search of knowledge."

رَبِّـــى زِدْنِى عِلْماً

"My Lord! Increase me in Knowledge"

Hasnain Walji

Plano, Texas

July ۴th, ۲۰۰۶ ce / ۷th Jumada II, ۱۴۲۷ ah

Biography of Ayatullah Mahdi Hadavi Tehrani

Ayatullah Mahdi Hadavi Tehrani was born in ۱۹۶۱ in the city of Tehran. After finishing elementary and middle school, he proceeded to high school. He graduated from Kharazmi High School, which was a well-known and accredited high school at that time, in mathematics and physics as an honor roll student. In the SAT's, he scored a high rank and was accepted at Sharif University of Technology where he studied Electrical Engineering.

He first started his Howza studies unofficially and in ۱۹۸۰, he started his official Howza studies in the Holy City of Qom. He went back to Tehran where he studied 'Arabic literature and logic under Ayatollah

Khoshvaqt. After his return to Qom, he finished the Sath (intermediate level studies) in five years, during which he was many times ranked top student in the Howza exams. He then started his advanced studies under great scholars such as Ayatullah al-'Uzma Shaykh Jawad Tabrizi, Ayatullah al-'Uzma Sayyid Wahid Khorasani, Ayatullah al-'Uzma Shaykh Muhammad Taqi Bahjat, Ayatullah al-'Uzma Shaykh Nasir Makarim Shirazi, Ayatullah Mirza Hashim 'Amuli and Ayatullah Shaykh Ja'far Subhani. Moreover, he mostly studied under Ayatullah Sayyid Kadim Ha'eri, and benefited from .his classes

In philosophy, he studied under eminent figures such as Ayatullah Ansari Shirazi, Ayatullah Hasan Zadeh Amoli, and Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi and for many years he picked off the branches of Ayatullah Jawadi Amoli's wisdom. In addition, since the early days of his stay in Qom, he started his relationship with Ayatullah Baha'o Dini, the great 'Arif. Eventually, he gained a closer relationship which he maintained until Ayatullah Baha'o Dini's demise. Not only did he practice 'Irfan and Akhlaq under Ayatullah Baha'o Dini, but he also studied Fiqh, Tafsir and Hadith under this great 'Arif .and Faqih

Ayatullah Hadavi has had the chance to teach all the beginner and intermediate level courses in the Howza. He has been teaching advanced level courses of Fiqh and Usul since ۱۹۹۰. His method of teaching, a new method in which he compares the topics and discussions in Islamic jurisprudence with that of modern law, has attracted much attention from numerous scholars and researchers. In addition, he has been and still is

teaching different issues of Logic, Philosophy and Theology. Some of his written .works are a product of the research which is in your hands

Other than teaching in the Howza, Ayatullah Hadavi has kept up an academic relation with the different universities and institutions of higher education. He is a member of the Council for Revising Humanities Text Books in the Ministry of Sciences, Research and Technology. He is the chairman of the Jurisprudence and Law Group in this council. In the Sharif University of Technology, he is a member of the Postgraduate .Scholarly Council of the Philosophy of Knowledge

Ayatullah Hadavi has done extensive studies and research on modern sciences such as economics, modern theology, philosophy of knowledge and philosophy of art. Some of his studies and research has been published in the form of books and .articles

The Ayatullah is fluent in English and Arabic and knows French and German to a great extent. His knowledge of English and computers has enabled him to be the first .scholar in Iran to answer questions on Islamic issues on the InterNet

Ayatullah Hadavi has been in contact with and visited Islamic centers all over Asia, Europe and Africa. In addition, he has participated in the founding of Islamic Organizations such as the Ahlul Bayt Association in Switzerland, the Mohammadia Association in Thailand, and the Islamic Center of Holland. He has also participated in .(the establishment of the World Council of Religious Leaders (WCRL

He is a member of the Supreme Council of the Ahlul

Bayt World Assembly, the Islamic Banking and Finance Consulting Committee, the WCRL's Board of Directors, and the head of the Academic Staff of Ayatullah .Khamenei's delegation to hajj

Ayatullah Ayatollah Hadavi currently has ١٠ books published in the fields of Logic, Rijal(١), Modern Theology, Qur`anic Sciences, Economics, Islamic Political Thought, :Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, Ethics and Education. These books are

(The Chest of Wisdom (two volumes (١

(Tahrirul Maqal Fi Kulliat 'ilmul Rijal ('Arabic (٢

(Wilayatul Faqih (principles, proofs and jurisdiction (٣

The Theological Bases of Ijtihad (Recognized as book of the year in ١٩٩٩ by the (٤ (Howza in Qom

Islam's Economic Doctrine and System (٥

Governance and Religion: Essays on the Islamic Political Thought (٦

Beliefs and Questions (٧

The History of the Principles of Jurisprudence (٨

To the Heavens with the Youth (٩

The Green Tryst (١٠

He also has a number of works that have not yet been published and are in the process, such as Hermeneutics and Religious Scripts, New Horizons in the Howza, Al-Hidayah: A Commentary on Bidayat-ol-Hikmah, The Laws of Property and Ownership, The Laws of Contracts, Art and Religion. These books have been written on topics in the fields of Theology, Philosophy, Principles of Jurisprudence and its history, The .History of Hadith, Jurisprudence and Law

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Question ۱: Divine Will and Human Will

point

?Question: What is the relationship between Divine will and human will

Short Answer

The human being is a contingent existent who derives his existence and

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۱- The study of transmitters who have narrated the sayings of the Noble Prophet (ص) and the Imams (ع).

existential qualities from Allah (awj). Allah (awj) has, by His generative will (irada takwini), created him as a volitional creature and has thus distinguished him from all other creatures. Hence, the human being is the highest being addressed by Allah's (awj) legislative will (irada tashri'i) and as such, has been given permission to choose between obedience and disobedience, to determine his way of life, and to mould his .own fate

The human being is the chosen creature who is able, by making the right choice, to obey the injunctions of Allah (awj); to ascend the levels of perfection by conforming to the legislative will of Allah (awj), and submitting his desire to the generative will of Allah (awj) thereby reaching the station of Divine regency – that level which in paradise, entitles him to receive whatever he wishes. Because he has chosen Divine satisfaction, Allah (awj) is satisfied with him and will provide for him so profoundly that .he will in return be pleased with Him and satisfied with his own conduct

But the human being can also make the wrong choice by taking up the path of disobedience and aversion to Divine injunctions, descending to the pits of saqar. This would be the result of not making his will conform to the legislative will of Allah (awj). However, this disobedience does not signify that he has overcome the Divine will, for .the Divinity Himself has willed that he should choose his path

In other words, Divine will encompasses the entire world

of existence – including the human being and his actions – and as such, transcends the human will, hierarchically. This is not the same as the concurrence of two independent, complete, and parallel causes in generating a single effect, which is impossible. Rather, in accordance with the principle of "unity of Divine Acts", the only independent agent in the cosmos is Allah (awj), and thus all other existents are .dependent on Allah (awj) in their existence and their agency

Thus, their will, which is an aspect of their agency, is not independent or detached of the Divine will. Therefore, we [as Shi'ites] neither approve of determinism as the Ash'arites do – who believe that the only will at work is the Divine will, thus considering all other agents sterile and merely tools for Allah (awj). Neither do we accept the concept of delegation which is held by the Mu'tazilites, who assume that Divine will should be abstracted from human will, thereby considering the human being a .sovereign agent in his volitional acts

,(ع) Rather, we, in following the teachings of the Qur`an and the infallible Imams consider the human being to be a willing and volitional agent, but at the same time we know him to be under the dominion of Divine will and governed by the authority of .(Allah (awj) – being essentially in need of the will and power of Allah (awj

Detailed Answer

Human will is vertically inferior to Divine will and as such is dependent on Divine will and

cannot exist independently and without need of Allah (awj). This is confirmed by many Qur`anic verses, among them the following:

"...but you do not wish unless it is wished by Allah, the Lord of all the worlds." (١)

But this in no way contradicts the human being's volition and his accountability for his thoughts, intentions, and actions. For it is he who is the direct agent of his will, choice, and conduct, but this is possible only through the power and permission that Allah (awj) has granted him in making his choices.

Thus, in many verses [seemingly contradicting the aforementioned verse which reserves authority solely for Allah (awj)] the actions of natural agents, including human beings, are attributed to themselves, thereby considering the human being responsible for his own conduct. And it is in this light that the Qur`an establishes certain responsibilities for him, giving him various encouragements and warnings. Two such verses read:

"...and that nothing belongs to man except what he strives for" (٢);

"Whoever acts righteously, it is for his own soul, and whoever does evil, it is to its detriment, and your Lord is not tyrannical to the servants." (٣)

Accordingly, on the one hand, the issue concerns the assumption that the human being's independence is in contrast to the principle of unity of Divine Acts and also to the essential need of existents for Allah (awj). On the other hand, there is the supposition that the human being is totally predetermined and hence powerless, undermining the rationale for all

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١- Surat al-Takwir (٨١), Verse ٢٩: ﴿وَمَا تَشَآءُونَ إِلاَّ أَنْ يَشَآءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ also see Surat al-Insan (٧٦), Verses ٣٠-٣١: ﴿وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلاَّ أَنْ يَشَآءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً حَكِيماً. يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَآءُ فِى رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَاباً أَلِيماً﴾

٢- Surat al-Najm (٥٣), Verse ٣٩: ﴿وَ أَنْ لَّيسَ لِلإِنْسَانِ إِلاَّ مَا سَعَى﴾

۳- Surat al-Fussilat (۴۱), Verse ۴۶: □ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَ مَنْ أَسَآءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَ مَا رَبُّکَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ □

Divine injunctions, encouragements, warnings, and consequently negating Divine justice and wisdom. Hence, the seemingly contradictory verses of the Qur`an must be reconciled by realising that some of those verses merely clarify the meaning of the others (and do not contradict them) so that we are able to avoid being entrapped by .either determinism or delegationism

:For a better understanding of this matter, attention must be paid to two points

۱. The different ways in which various causes concur in creating an effect;

۲. The various ways in which the Divine will can be conceived of.

:The concurrence of causes in generating an effect can transpire in two ways

۱. One possibility is that in the occurrence of a phenomenon only one cause is responsible; such as the Divine Act of creation in which Allah (awj) produces directly and without the mediation of any other existent, or like the dependency of human conceptions on the mind [in which case, it is solely the mind that generates the mental .[concepts and images without the mediation of any other agent

۲. The other possibility is that several causes are responsible in the creation of a :phenomenon. This possibility can itself be conceived in several ways

a. The various causes are responsible in a collective manner. In this case, each cause is referred to in technical terms as an "incomplete cause" and all of them considered collectively are referred to as the "complete cause." An example is the interaction of .water, light, heat, seed, soil, farmer's work, etc

in the growth of a plant. In this case, not only is the concurrence of multiple causes not .impossible, it is a necessary prerequisite for the production of the effect

b. The various causes are responsible in an alternating manner. Such as if a certain machine had three motors, but they had to operate one at a time, hence one motor would come into operation only after the previous one had stopped, thereby providing the machine with a constant and uninterrupted movement. [Hence, the constant motion being the effect of three alternating causes.] In this case also, the cooperation and combination of all the causes is necessary for sustaining the effect. However, in this case, there is no particular dependency between the causes as there is in the .third case

c. Certain causes are dependent on other ones in efficacy but without such a dependency in their existences such as the roles that human volition, the motion of the hand, etc. play in producing writing [in which case the will to write propels the hand into motion, which in turn moves the pen, and which in turn makes ink marks on the paper that constitute the writing] or such as the soldier's obeying his superior [in which case, the soldier's will to perform a certain action depends on the superior giving an order but the soldier's existence itself does not depend on the superior's .[existence

d. Two sets of causes are at work in generating one effect in the same mode ((haythiyyah

and from the same aspect (jahah)—which is technically referred to as "the concurrence of two complete causes in generating one effect." An example of this would be a single piece of writing on one specific corner of a sheet of paper, written .by two writers writing simultaneously

Or if one particular plant were to grow by the work of two [distinct and independent] groups of causes—e.g. soil, farmer, seed, etc.—simultaneously. In this case, "mutual .exclusion" would result, and thus [the actualization of] this case is impossible

For, the agency [i.e. the work, the acting] of each set would bar the agency of the other set, resulting in either one rendering the other ineffective (which would mean that two complete causes have not actually concurred and only one has produced the effect unilaterally) or both mutually hindering the agency of one another (which would mean that neither of the complete causes has been actualized so as to take part in creating an effect). Therefore, as this case is impossible, there is no actual instance of .it

e. Several sets of causes, vertically associated, generate a single effect, in such a manner that the inferior cause is dependent upon the superior in its existence as well as in its agency [or efficacy]; such as, the relation between the grandparents and the .parents in the procreation of the latter's children

Considering the above-mentioned classification, it must be clarified under which of the aforementioned categories the concurrence of Divine causation, agency, and will with those of

.His creatures—including human beings—falls

If this concurrence were of the first, second, or third types, the result would be the existential independence of the human being and the rest of the creatures from Allah (awj), which would contradict the unity of the Divine Acts. Thus on careful examination, the possibility of such instances would prove unacceptable. It cannot be of the fourth category either, as this does not have any occurrence in reality. Furthermore, it is erroneous to consider the concurrence of human will with Divine will impossible as the human being would not even exist without his connection to Allah (awj), and thus his complete agency as parallel to Allah (awj) is not possible(١) so to give rise to the potentiality of parallel and simultaneous concurrence in generating (one effect.(٢

Thus the only category plausible is the last one; that is, the human will and agency .being vertically inferior to Divine will and agency

However to understand how the concurrence of Divine and human will in such a vertical manner does not contradict man's free will, attention must be paid to the .different types of Divine will

:In a general classification, Divine will is understood in two ways

;The will of essence .١

.The will of action .٢

.The latter is subdivided into the generative will and the legislative will

The Will of Essence: It is the Divine will that is assigned to Him without the need to consider the creatures or Allah's (awj) relation to them. Hence, it is

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For this would mean that the human being is independent of Allah (awj) in his - ١ (.existence. (Tr

٢ – The reason why this is being said here is that those who have refuted the concurrence of Divine will with human will have first assumed that the only manner in which two causes can concur is if they were parallel in their agency and causation. And because this type of concurrence is obviously impossible, they concluded that the human being is independent in his will. While their mistake stems from their lack of conceiving two or more causes related in a vertical and hierarchical manner; i.e. cause B receiving its existence and efficacy from cause A; and cause C in turn receiving its existence and efficacy from cause B, and so on. (Tr.)

identical with the Divine Essence and is the necessary requirement of Divine volition, of His not being restrained by any other agent, of His not being overpowered by anything, and of His needlessness in relation to all creatures. The human being and his relation to Allah (awj) have no role in this sense of Divine will.

The Generative Will of Action: This is Allah's (awj) will in establishing the objective destiny and portion; that is, it pertains to the systems governing the cosmos, how things come about and operate, and their certain and definite ends This is manifested in the creation of creatures in different shapes, different ways, and in different times.

In the world of being, the Divine generative will governs the entire corpus of existents, including human beings, and as such, no creature has the will or choice to violate it, as is pointed out in the following verses:

"Then He turned to the heaven, and it was smoke, and He said to it and to the Earth, 'Come! Willingly or unwillingly!' They said, 'We come heartily.'"(۱);

and,

"There is none in the heavens and the earth but he comes to the All-beneficent as a servant."(۲)

The human being has been created as a willing and volitional creature based on the Divine generative will of action and thus cannot divest himself of free choice and will. So whether he likes it or not, he must act on his own accord, choose the path he desires to follow and

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۱- Surat al-Fussilat (۴۱), Verse ۱۱: ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَآءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعاً أَوْ كَرْهاً قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ

۲- Surat Maryam (۱۹), Verse ۹۳: إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبْداً

determine his own fate. He has no choice in being a volitional creature, just as he has no say in choosing his parents, his gender, or his appearance.

The Legislative Will of Action. This will is identical with Divine legislation for the willing and volitional human being.(١) In the very act of lawmaking for humanity, no one can share the authority with Allah (awj) and no one is capable of changing the laws before they reach the people.

Therefore, the angels, prophets, and successors to the prophets are duty bound to convey to the people the exact rules revealed to them without the slightest change and to interpret and clarify them only in the framework designated by Allah (awj). It is in the stage of implementing these injunctions that the human being has been given the capacity to obey or disobey [on his own accord].

Hence, by making the right decision, the human being can conform his will to the will of Allah (awj), the Supreme, and being satisfied with the Divine generative will, can decide to abide unconditionally by the Divine legislative will thereby securing his final felicity and meriting the leisure and serenity of Paradise—to such an extent that Allah (awj) will satisfy his wishes, whatever they may be, very quickly;

"...but those who have faith and do righteous deeds will be in the gardens of paradise: they will have whatever they wish near their Lord. This is the greatest grace."(٢)

As they preferred Divine satisfaction over their

١- That is, this concept is abstracted from the act of legislation itself and externally has no instance but the legislation itself. However, the human mind abstracts it from the concept of legislation itself and treats it as a different entity, although externally both concepts refer to the same thing. (Tr.)

٢- Surat al-Shura (٤٢), Verse ٢٢: وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِى رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَآءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الكَبِيرُ Also see: Surat Qaf (٥٠), Verse ٣٥; Surat al-Nahl (١۶), Verse ٣١; Surat al-Zumar (٣٩), Verse ٣۴; Surat al-Furqan (٢٥), Verse ١۶

own, Allah (awj) will in return be pleased with them and will reward them so (abundantly that they would be happy with what they have done and with their Lord.(1)

Therefore, the human being can, on his own accord, will that which Allah (awj) wills and be satisfied with Allah's (awj) existential and legislative satisfaction—refusing to want or to seek anything but that which Allah (awj) wants from him and that which He pleases.(2) In so doing, the human being has willed in accordance to the Divine generative and legislative wills, although the human will and potency themselves have been bestowed to the human being by this same Divine generative will, and as such his existence and will is an extension of the will and existence of Allah (awj). This concurrence entails no contradiction and thus is not impossible for it is not the .concurrence of two complete causes in the generation of one effect

At the same time, the human will and volition has not been denied to him. Rather, because Allah (awj) has given him the permission to will and choose, he determines what path he wants to follow and in doing so ends up willing what Allah (awj) has .willed

If the human being disobeys and violates the legislative will of Allah (awj), doing what Allah (awj) dislikes, he has done so on his own accord and as such, has headed towards an awful fate. But this disobedience is not a violation of Allah's (awj) ,generative will

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۱- : Surat al-Bayyinah (۹۸), Verse ۸: جَزَاؤُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِی مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَداً رَضِیَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَٰلِکَ لِمَنْ خَشِیَ رَبَّهُ Also see: Surat al-Mujadalah (۵۸), Verse ۲۲; Surat al-Tawbah (۹), Verse ۱۰۰; Surat al-Ma'idah (۵), Verse ۱۱۹

۲- : Surat al-Insan (۷۶), Verse ۳۰; Surat al-Takwir (۸۱), Verse ۲۹: وَمَا تَشَآءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَآءَ اللَّهُ

for He has, through His own generative will, created the human being willing and volitional, and as such has given him the capacity to defy His legislative will. Accordingly, this defiance does not signify the human being's overcoming the will and power of Allah (awj). He can deprive the hopeless human being of his will and power ,whenever He desires and it is concerning this that He says

Do those who commit misdeeds suppose that they can out-manoeuvre Us? Evil is the" (judgment that they make."(١)

To sum up: In the realm of generative will and the act of Divine legislation itself, the human will cannot exert any influence whatsoever, and hence the question of the .concurrence of Divine will and human will does not arise at this stage

When it comes to the level of abiding by the legislative will, the human will is ontologically an extension of Divine will. If he obeys the Divine injunctions, he has on his own accord aligned his desire to what Allah (awj) desires and as such, is pleased with the Divine generative will, and with this correct decision, has secured a felicitous end for himself. If he disobeys, if he does not make Allah's (awj) desire his own desire, he has acted only to his own disadvantage, without in any way damaging the creation or harming Allah (awj) for Allah (awj) has through His generative will, granted him the capacity to defy and disobey but has at the same time, through His legislative

١ - ﴿ :Surat al-'Ankabut (٢٩), Verse ٤ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّـيِّـئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْبِقُونَا سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴾ Also see: Surat al-Zumar (٣٩), Verse ٥١: ﴿ فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّـئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ هَٰؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴾

.will, warned him of the consequences

Thus by making the wrong decision of disobeying Allah (awj), he has incurred Allah's (awj) wrath. Although, he might arrogantly think that in doing so he has overcome Allah's (awj) will, the reality of the matter is that the creature can never, even while disobeying, escape the Divine domain, power, and will. The creature is always in need .of that Most Sacred Essence

:It is to this that the following verse speaks

Whatever good befalls you is from Allah; and whatever ill befalls you is from" (yourself."(١)

Although in essence, everything is from Allah (awj) for nothing can occur without His consent, but the issue is that He does not deem misdeeds and evil appropriate for the human being, and it is the human being himself who, in misusing his free will, chooses (evil.(٢)

However we do admit that to conceive and comprehend the relationship of human volition to Divine will- i.e. the immutable cosmological system- is difficult. It is precisely for this reason that those who are not in touch with Divine revelation and the school of .have strayed to antipodal extremes in this regard (ع) Ahlul Bayt

One group, the Mu'tazilites, concluded that the human being has been granted absolute autonomy, and as such is the only agent involved in his actions—and for this they have been termed The Delegators(٣); another group, the Ash'arites, saw the human being as lacking any role in conducting his actions, hence being compelled in his actions, without free will

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١- : Surat al-Nisa` (۴), Verse ٧٩: مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ...

٢- : Surat al-Nisa` (۴), Verses ٧٨-٧٩: ...وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَٰذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَٰذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ... مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ...

The name arises from the fact that they assume that Allah (awj) has delegated His -٣ authority to the human being in the realm of his volitional actions and so He does not (.take part in human actions. (Tr

and the right to choose- and for this they have been termed The Compelled Ones. But the truth and the right path is the intermediate path, that is, neither the theory of compulsion nor delegation.

The generative will of Allah (awj) concurs with human will in a vertical manner. If the human being obeys, the Divine legislative will and the human will are in harmony, but if he disobeys, his will and action are despised by Allah (awj). But the latter does not imply liberation from Divine dominion and sovereignty or the overcoming of the will and power of Allah (awj). Such disobedience only signifies being removed from Divine mercy as a result of the individual's own misuse of volition and free will.

Question ٢: Free Choice Divine Seal Lock upon the hearts of the Perverse

point

Question: Isn't there a discrepancy between Islam's view of the human being as a creature endowed with free choice and assertation of the Qur`an that Allah (awj) shuts the hearts, ears and eyes of some to the truth?

At the outset, we will consider two Qur`anic verses, thereafter elucidating the answer to the above question.

In the first verse, we read:

"As for the faithless, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith. Allah has set a seal on their hearts and their hearing, and there is a blindfold on their sight and there is a great punishment for them."(١)

In the second verse we read:

"Allah has set a seal on their hearts,

١ - Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verses ٦-٧: ﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَ أَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لاَ يُؤْمِنُونَ. خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

(so they do not know."(1)

The meanings of Khatm, Tab', and Qalb

Khatm is contrasted to fath (to "begin" or "start") and means "to complete something" or "to reach the end". The reason why khatm is translated as "sealing" is that the seal in a letter indicates its end. A letter is sealed when it is finished, barring the addition of (new material. (2)

Tab' also denotes the act of sealing (in which sense it is close in meaning to khatm) as (well as sketching, imprinting, and forging metals into coins.(3)

Qalb is employed in the Qur`an in different senses, such as soul, heart, self, intellect, (knowledge, etc.(4)

Nevertheless, it can generally be said that the human being possesses two types of heart: the corporeal heat and the spiritual heart. The corporeal heart is, in physiological terminology and in the vernacular, a muscular organ with the peculiar shape, whose function is the circulation and purification of blood, and in most human .beings rests in the left section of the chest

The spiritual heart is one and the same with the spirit and the psyche of the human being. However in the ethical and gnostic terminologies and also in the vocabulary of the Qur`an and the hadiths, heart is used in the latter sense, and as such is the conduit for the conveyance of Divine inspirations and Revelation and the means of achieving Divine knowledge and witnessing the epiphanies of the Truth. It is the locus of human emotions and the root

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۱ - Also see Surat al-An'am (۶), Verse ۴۶; Surat al-Shura (۴۲), Verse ۲۴; Surat al-Jathiiyah (۴۵۰), Verse ۲۳ Surat al-Tawbah (۹), Verse ۹۳: ﴿ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

۲ - Also see Surat al-Nisa` (۴), Verse ۱۵۵; Surat al-A'raf (۷), Verse ۱۰۰; Surat al-Tawbah

(۹), Verse ۸۷; Surat Yunus (۱۰), Verse ۷۴; Surat al-Nahl (۱۶), Verse ۱۰۸; Surat Muhammad (۴۷), Verse ۱۶ Majma' al-Bayan, vol. ۱, pg. ۱۲۹

.Ibid -۳

al-Mizan, vol. ۲, pg. ۲۲۳-۲۲۴ -۴

.of the exalted human intentions and aspirations

The point in common between the two usages of qalb (heart) has been expounded as follows. Qalb literally means change and transformation. The muscular heart derives its name from the responsibility to change the blood and purify it. Similarly, as human emotions and intentions are in constant flux and change, their locus has been termed .qalb

Brief Answer

In many verses there is mention of the unbelievers' and hypocrites' hearts, eyes, and ears being sealed and of the sinful and perverse being misled. Khatm and tab' [both meaning "seal"] denote ending, stamping a seal, imprinting, printing, and rendering .things in certain shapes

Heart in some instances denotes the particular organ of the body—i.e., the corporeal heart—and in other instances it is used to denote the human spirit, soul, etc.—the .psychic and spiritual heart

Allah's (awj) sealing the spiritual and inward hearts of some human beings indicates their inability to be guided, their hearts being shut to the understanding and .comprehension of Divine knowledge and their failure to turn to good and virtue

The sealing of their hearts, ears, and eyes by Allah (awj) is the result of their own volitional conduct and their ignoring the repeated admonitions of Allah (awj). In addition, although their hearts, ears, and eyes are sealed—this seal encompasses various levels and degrees. If it is such that the darkness of sin and malice has .pervaded their hearts completely, they will never return to virtue and guidance

Of course this does not mean that

it would be impossible for them to return to the light of faith and guidance, for the possibility of change and transformation exists till the very brink of death. Therefore, they are not deprived of free choice. They can by their free choice either remain on their same perverse ways, or they can choose with a firm and resolute decision, though it be difficult, to change their ways, and by finding the way of guidance and hearkening to the Divine instructions, attain to ultimate felicity.

In other words, to the extent that one's heart is stained by the dross of sin, one is proportionately sealed off from the path of truth and deprived of understanding the Divine Signs and benefiting from His light and guidance. It should also be noted that perversion and the shutting of the heart is not exclusive to the unbelievers and the hypocrites.

Detailed Answer

Allah's (awj) seal on the hearts

In the Qur`an, various terms have been used to refer to the incorrigibility of the hearts of the unbelievers, hypocrites, and the spiteful; among them khatm (sealed), tab‘ (sealed), sarf (turned away), qufl (locked), marad (ill), rayn (tainted), etc. Of course, the shutting of the heart and its corruption is not exclusive to the unbelievers and hypocrites. The heart of the human being—including the believer—is twisted and sealed and deprived of comprehending the Divine Signs in proportion as it is contaminated with the dross of sin.

Thus, sealing the heart refers to the shutting of this conduit for receiving Divine knowledge and inspiration, and the means

.of this sealing can be inferred from the hadiths mentioned below

as having said: "There (ع) Zurarah has narrated that Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir is not a servant but that his heart contains a white slate. When he commits a sin, a black dot appears on it. Thereafter, if he repents, that black dot will disappear, but if he continues the sin, the blackness will expand, such that it will ultimately cover the entire whiteness. After the white slate has been entirely covered, the possessor of that heart will never return to good and virtue. And this is the meaning of the word of ,God where He says

No indeed! Rather their hearts have been sullied by what they have been earning.'"(۱)'
(and (۲

There are certain factors that cause the accumulation of dross in the heart. In the Noble Qur`an the following issues are enumerated as accounting for the sealing of the heart: disbelief(۳); heedlessness and continuous indifference(۴); vow-breaking and brazen sinfulness(۵); obstinacy and distorting the Divine Word(۶); self-willedness .(and acting against one's knowledge(۷): causing corruption, dishonouring family ties(۸

Thus, the veils that cover one's heart and the obstacles that impede the function of the spiritual heart, hearing, and sight are the results of one's own volitional conduct. The Divine seal is set by way of punishment and not gratuitously. For, there exists a necessary and definite link between one's conduct, intentions, and thoughts and their .effects, which is inescapable

The reason that this scheme is attributed to

۱- Surat al-Mutaffifin (۸۳), Verse ۱۴: { كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ }
۲- Al-Kafi, vol. ۲, pg. ۲۷۳: عَنْ أَبِی جَعْفَرٍ (ع) قَالَ: مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ إِلاَّ وَفِی قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةٌ بَيْضَاءُ، فَإِذَا أَذْنَبَ ذَنْباً خَرَجَ فِی النُّكْتَهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءُ، فَإِنْ تَابَ ذَهَبَ ذٰلِكَ السَّوَادُ وَإِنْ تَمَادى فِی الذُّنُوبِ زَادَ ذٰلِكَ السَّوَادُ حَتَّى يُغَطِّىَ الْبَيَاضَ لَمْ يَرْجِعْ صَاحِبُهُ إِلى خَيْرٍ أَبَداً وَهُوَ قَوْلُ اللّٰهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: { كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ }
۳- Surat al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۸۸: { وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَا يُؤْمِنُونَ }

۴- Surat al-A‘raf (۷), Verse ۱۷۹: } وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لاَ يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لاَ
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لاَ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُوْلَٰئِكَ كَالأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُوْلَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ {
۵- Surat al-Ma`idah (۵), Verse ۱۳: } فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ
وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلاَ تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ { also
Surat al-A‘raf (۷), Verse ۱۰۲: } وَمَا وَجَدْنَا لِأَكْثَرِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِنْ وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَفَاسِقِينَ {
۶- Surat al-Baqarah (۲), Verses ۶۷ ۷۴: } وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا
قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِين { } ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا
يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَّقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ {
۷- Surat al-Jathiyah (۴۵), Verse ۲۳: } أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَى سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ
وَجَعَلَ عَلَى بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلاَ تَذَكَّرُونَ {
۸- Surat Muhammad (۴۷), Verse ۲۲: } فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الأَرْضِ وَتُقَطِّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ {

Allah (awj) is that the causal relationship between human conduct, intentions, and thoughts and their effects is a Divinely destined and decreed process which is immutable, except in cases where other factors—such as repentance, Divine alerts, tribulations, or the help of a Possessor of the Breath, i.e., a friend of Allah (awj)—affect the human being, bringing about his spiritual transformation, purging his heart .of the dross of sin, and once again rejuvenating him with the capacity to be guided

In other words, Divine destiny and decree are but a part and parcel of the regulations governing the cosmos and the necessity of an effect following its complete cause. And in the case of the volitional acts of the human being, will, decision, and intention are among the essential components of the complete cause and hence are necessary to .bring about his volitional acts

When the human being performs a certain action, its effects inescapably leave their impression on the human soul and psyche. In this light, if the human being himself prepares the grounds for Allah (awj) sealing his heart, by the Law of the cosmos, its .effects will haunt him

:In the light of what has been said the following points can be highlighted

١. Allah (awj) sealing of the heart is the direct outcome of the volitional conduct of the .human being

٢. As the sealing of the heart is part of the cosmic scheme of Divine destiny and .(decree, it is attributed to Allah (awj

٣. The human being

whose heart has been tainted by the dross of sin can add to his spiritual contamination by repeating the past mistakes. It should be noted that this .perpetuation of sin is on his own accord

Although it is very difficult for the sinful human being whose heart is covered with .۴ the dross of sin to return to the path of righteousness and is very unlikely, it is not impossible. He can choose with a firm resolution to embark on purging his heart of the darkness of sin. In other words, if the soul and heart of the unbeliever and hypocrite become sealed and dark and debased such that no bright space remains, he is, to employ the words of the Qur`an, finished and there is no hope of his redemption. He has intentionally removed himself from the path of guidance and light and thus has .shut the door of repentance on himself

Question ۳: Possibility of knowledge of Allah

point

Question: Is it possible for humankind to know Allah (awj)? If yes, to what degree and ?what is the value of such knowledge

The human being can attain knowledge of Allah (awj) through various ways. This knowledge can come about through the medium of the intellect or of the heart. At times he—as in the case of the sage and the philosopher—reasons and understands through conceptual knowledge and with recourse to sense perception and the intellect, whilst at other times he—as in the case of the gnostic—through immediate .intuition, gazes at the Beloved, witnessing Him directly

Knowledge of

Allah (awj) is analogous to knowledge of a fire. An individual at times realizes the existence of a fire by witnessing its smoke from afar. At other times, he might realize its existence by seeing the fire itself. Yet at other times, he might comprehend and .feel the fire as if a part of his body is burned by it

In any case, in both ways—i.e. conceptual knowledge and immediate knowledge—sometimes the path, the traveller, and the goal are one and the same, as when one concludes the existence of Allah (awj) by reflecting on Divine signs and the existing order pervading them. In other instances, only the traveller and the path might be identical, as when one comprehends Allah (awj) through understanding his own soul. The path and the goal can also be the same, as where one comprehends Allah (awj) .by contemplating on the Divine Names and Attributes

Of these types, the case where the path and the goal are identical, where one spiritually experiences what he has conceptually realized is of great value, for the goal .is to see and to taste

In the Qur`anic verses and the corpus of narrations these three ways have been articulated. It has especially been emphasized that nothing is more evident than Divine existence and manifestation and hence He must be reached through Himself. He is the Light, the apprehension of which is needless of anything else. If we are deprived of seeing Him, it is because of the veil of

our negligence that covers our conceptual and immediate knowledge – we lack .awareness of our knowledge

In order to attain this complex knowledge (‘ilm-e murakkab [i.e. awareness of knowledge]) we must remove the veils of darkness and of light from our souls. It is for this reason that it has been said that knowing Allah (awj) is innate and inherent to the human being, and as such, the arguments provided in proving the existence of Allah (awj) and the knowledge of Him serve only as reminders, not proofs. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the core of Divine Essence and Attributes are neither comprehensible to the philosopher nor to the gnostic. However, other aspects of the Divine are accessible to both the intellect of the philosopher and the spiritual .experience of the gnostic

In responding to this question, first the media of understanding must be introduced. The media of understanding are the physical senses, the intellect, and the heart. The external senses merely deal with the appearances and the accidents of things without being able to delve any deeper, and despite the variety and abundance of knowledge .they provide to the human being, they are limited by time and space

The intellect is a special faculty, the major role of which is the comprehension of universal concepts and in this sense possesses many aspects – among them reasoning. But the media of understanding are not restricted to these two. The human being can reach great degrees of knowledge through the medium

of the heart. By this way, the human being can spiritually witness [the reality of] what others understand [only theoretically] through reasoning. The gnostics' endeavour is (to comprehend Allah (awj) in this way.(١)

From another perspective, knowledge can be divided into two general categories: conceptual knowledge and presential or immediate knowledge. Conceptual knowledge is obtained through mental concepts and the implementation of rational and philosophic reasoning. Presential knowledge is the knowledge arrived at without the mediation of concepts and mental pictures; that is, the reality of the known object is present within the knower. Presential knowledge is a type of gnostic and intuitive knowledge, in which the external reality [and not the mental concept] of an object is .witnessed

Of course, in the obtainment of rational conceptual knowledge, sensory and empirical premises can be employed. For instance, by reflecting on the signs of Allah (awj) and the existing order in the cosmos, one can achieve an understanding of Allah (awj) that is rendered by a simple reasoning. But in cases where one desires to achieve a .greater understanding, purely rational premises are required

In any case, it must be borne in mind that firstly, Allah (awj) cannot be proven nor refuted by exclusive recourse to laboratory experiments or scientific, empirical principles for the grasp of sensory experimentation is far shorter than to be able to .pierce into the supernatural

Therefore, sensory knowledge alone cannot solve the problem, it must be employed in the premises of rational reasoning [if it is to

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١- Though it is possible to reach understanding and certainty based on traditions and authority as well; but in this case it is necessary to have previously proved both the fact that the traditions in question were in fact quoted correctly from the holders of authority, such as the Immaculates, and the fact that such traditions have cognitive value. It is only then that they can be used as the standards by which to judge the

.findings of either the intellect or the heart

be useful]. Secondly, despite the fact that in Islamic texts, studying the extroversive (afaqi)(١) signs of Allah (awj) has been encouraged,(٢) which is in a sense considered a rational method since it involves reasoning, it must not be overlooked that studying the creatures, the signs of Divine creativity and wisdom, only reveals that there is an omnipotent and omniscient being governing the world; but other than that, this method fails to render the attributes of that being; for instance, whether it is self-sufficient.

As for intuitive and immediate comprehension, it can be conceived in three ways: a cause's immediate knowledge of its effect, an immaterial existent's immediate knowledge of its own essence, [and finally] an effect's immediate knowledge of its cause. The creatures' awareness of Allah (awj) is of the third type. And the human being's weakness in comprehending Allah (awj) is in proportion to his [existential] weakness. Thus, although that Sacred Essence is proximate to everything, but their proximity to Him depends on their existential degree and limit.

Muhaqqiq Tusi provides a good analogy regarding the degrees of knowledge of Allah (awj). He says one's knowledge of Allah (awj) resembles one's knowledge of fire, the most limited form of which is being told the qualities of fire by somebody else who has seen it. A more advanced awareness of fire is when one observes its smoke. The third degree is feeling the heat and witnessing the light it radiates. The final degree of knowledge of fire is being inflamed and

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١- Or macrocosmic signs. That is, the signs outside of the human mind and body.

٢- Surat al-Fussilat (٤١), Verse ٥٣: ﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِـنَا فِى الآفَاقِ وَفِى أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ﴾

.burned to ashes

A point necessary to mention at this stage is that in speaking of knowledge of Allah (awj), we might either be referring to proving His existence or to contemplating His attributes. In both cases we can have recourse to the intellect to employ conceptual knowledge in order to understand intellectually, or we can go through the path of the heart, to embark on immediate intuitive knowledge in order to behold. The former is termed burhan, the latter, ‘irfan. Without question, the method prevalent in .philosophic reasoning is not as valuable as gnostic revelations

In any case, regardless of whether we traverse the path of the intellect or the heart, there are three ways for acquiring knowledge of Allah (awj). In other words, the intellectual or gnostic journey of the philosopher or the spiritual wayfarer :[respectively] could fall under one of three categories

١. The traveller (salik), the path (maslak), and the goal (maslk ‘ilayh) are distinct; such as if one reaches the conclusion [that Allah (awj) exists] by observing and contemplating the order and harmony of the universe, by realizing that all things are needy and so there must be something needless they depend on, hence the (Originator. Some Qur`anic verses encourage people to take up this method.(١

٢. The traveller and the path are one and the same; such as if one contemplates the world within himself, addressing questions such as, “Who am I?”; “Where am I from?”; “Why aren’t my inclinations, my allegiances under my control?”; “Why

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١- Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ١٦٤: إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاَفِ اللَّيلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِى تَجْرِى فِى الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

"?can I not tame my wild mind so as to control what memories it recalls

alludes to this method in the following words: "I came to know (ع) Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib Allah by observing the strong wills that trembled, the difficult entanglements that were disentangled, and the decisions that were crushed."(۱) In another instance he (says, "Whoever comprehends himself has indeed comprehended his Lord."(۲

The path and the goal are one and the same. That is, the traveller—the philosopher .۳ or the spiritual wayfarer—by contemplating the destination discovers the object of his desire (maqsud). This is the most profound way of understanding, for it transcends the levels of extroversive and introversive journeys, thereby realizing, through .contemplating the Absolute Witness, that Allah (awj) is the Absolute Witness

:The Qur`an states

(Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things?"(۳"

First, He is witnessed and comprehended, and then [in His light] all other things, for He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth. The Essence of Unicity [i.e. Allah (awj)] is the clearest witness to and proof of Himself and as such, renders unnecessary any (intermediary for comprehension of Him.(۴

,So it is that in addressing His messenger He says

You were certainly oblivious of this. We have removed your veil from you, and so" (your sight is acute today."(۵

.(The veil is removed from the individual, not from the reality or from Allah (awj

(ع) In the Supplication of 'Arafah, Imam Husayn b. 'Ali

۱- Nahj al-Balaghah, Short Saying ۲۵۰: عَرَفْتُ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ بِفَسخِ الْعَزَائِمِ وَحِلِّ الْعُقُودِ.

۲- Jawahir al-Saniyyah, pg. ۱۱۶: مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ.

۳- Surat al-Fussilat (۴۱), Verse ۵۳: ﴿ أَوَلَـمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَـى كُلِّ شَيءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴾

۴- □ Surat Ibrahim (۱۴), Verse ۱۰: قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِى اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ □

۵- □ Surat Qaf (۵۰), Verse ۲۲: لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِى غَفْلَةٍ مِنْ هٰذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ □

deals with this third method. He says, “O Allah! Do others possess a light that You lack so that they must shed light upon You? When have You been absent so as to be needy of proof? When have You ever been distant so that Your effects and creatures should (move us close to You?”(١)

The same theme resonates in the following couplet: “You have never distanced Yourself so that I should seek Your presence. You have never been hidden so that I ”.should make You manifest

Blind be the eye that does not“ ,(ع) And again in the words of Imam Husayn b. ‘Ali behold You ... It is You whom I beseech in seeking union with You, and it is Your own existence that I seek as proof for Your existence.” In this phrase, it is expressed that for the spiritual wayfarer, Allah (awj) is more manifest than the sky, the earth, the .leaves of trees, etc

alludes to this point in the following words: (ع) Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq “When someone is present and manifest, we first know him through his self, then we get to know his attributes. But in the case of something absent, knowledge of its attributes precedes knowledge of its essence ... Just as in the case of Yusuf’s brother, they studied Yusuf himself and recognized it was him. They asked him, ‘Are you really Yusuf?’ They did not formulate their question the other way around(٢); meaning, they reflected on

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١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٩٥ pg. ٢٢٦; also Mafatih al-Jinan: أَيَكُونُ لِغَيْرِكَ مِنَ الظُّهُورِ مَا لَيسَ لَكَ حَتَّى يَكُونَ هُوَ الْمُظْهِرَ لَكَ؟ مَتَى غِبْتَ حَتَّى تَحْتَاجَ إِلَى دَلِيلٍ يَدُلُّ عَلَيْكَ؟ وَمَتَى بَعُدْتَ حَتَّى تَكُونَ الآثَارُ هِيَ الَّتِي تُوصِلُ إِلَيكَ؟

٢- It must be pointed out that in Farsi and ‘Arabic in asking if the person being addressed is the same one the former had heard about or known previously, he can put the question forth in two ways. He can say, in the case of ‘Arabic, a anta fuln (lit. Are you ...?) or a fuln ant (lit. Is... you?). The latter case is not used in English. Therefore, the reasoning forwarded in the text should be understood in the context of

(.the ‘Arabic language. (Tr

the qualities of the person whom they were confronted with and realized that he was Yusuf. They did not ask others to identify Yusuf for them.”(1)

Based on the aforementioned explanations, it has been concluded that contingent existents are realities whose existence is nothing but their relation to the Necessary Existent. Otherwise, they would be needless in their essences which would in turn mean that they would be necessary by their essences, which is obviously false.

Thus, they are in their entire existence dependent on the Necessary Essence and it is impossible to view the relation [i.e. the creature, for as previously mentioned the contingent existent is nothing but that relation] without the object to which it is related (marbut ‘ilayh). That is, comprehending the effect independent of its cause is impossible. Thus, the comprehension of every thing, even purely material existents, is concomitant with comprehending the Necessary Existent.

Although knowledge is of two types: simple knowledge and compound knowledge, even as ignorance is of both types. Simple knowledge is one’s knowledge of an issue without being aware of the existence of that knowledge. Compound knowledge is when one’s knowledge is realized; that is, when one knows that he knows. We are of the opinion that a knowledge of Allah (awj) exists in all human beings; it could be conceptual or presential and the object of that knowledge could be anything. That is, when one comprehends something, whether through conceptual knowledge or presential knowledge, he has comprehended Allah (awj) along with it.(2)

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۱- Tuhaf al-’Uqul, pg. ۳۲۷: إِنَّ مَعْرِفَهَ عَيْنِ الشَّاهِدِ قَبْلَ صِفَتِهِ وَمَعْرِفَهَ صِفَهِ الْغَائِبِ قَبْلَ عَيْنِهِ. قِيلَ: وَكَيْفَ نَعْرِفُ عَيْنَ الشَّاهِدِ قَبْلَ صِفَتِهِ؟ قَالَ (ع): تَعْرِفُهُ وَتَعْلَمُ عِلْمَهُ وَتَعْرِفُ نَفْسَكَ بِهِ وَلَا تَعْرِفُ نَفْسَكَ بِنَفْسِكَ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ. وَتَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مَا فِيهِ لَهُ وَبِهِ كَمَا قَالُوا لِيُوسُفَ: إِنَّكَ لَأَنْتَ يُوسُفَ قَالَ أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهٰذَا أَخِي فَعَرَفُوهُ بِهِ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفُوهُ بِغَيْرِهِ.

۲- al-Tawhid by Shaykh Saduq, pg. ۱۴۳: لَا يُدْرِكُ مَخْلُوقٌ شَيْئاً إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَلَا تُدْرَكُ مَعْرِفَهُ اللّٰهِ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ.

,Qur`an states

(He is known to every one ignorant of Him."(1)"

Even the person in doubt comprehends Allah (awj) prior to comprehending his doubt for Allah (awj) is the cause of his doubt and so the doubt is nothing but a relation to Allah (awj). So yes it is true; some are unaware of their knowledge of Allah (awj) and .as such are oblivious to this necessary comprehension

said, "I do not see anything but that I see (ع) Therefore, when Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib Allah prior to it" or "I do not worship a Lord I do not see"(2) he was aware of his ,knowledge. He had grasped the truth of the verse

(so whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah."(3..."

The face cannot be beheld without beholding the possessor of the face. He was a gnostic who through voluntary extinguishment witnessed, in this world that other-than-Him is hidden and it is He, the Creator, Who is manifest, and it was because of (this that he said, "If the veils were to be lifted, my certainty would not increase."(4

Whatever serves as an obstacle to sight or understanding is referred to as a veil. A veil is either of darkness or of light. Regarding the veil of darkness which is the veil of materiality, there are three elements: the subject from whom the matter in question is hidden, the veil, and the veiled [i.e. the object that is hidden]. But regarding the veil of light there are

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۱- al-Tawhid by Shaykh Saduq, pg. ۵۸: ...مَعْرُوفٌ عِنْدَ كُلِّ جَاهِلٍ...

۲- al-Kafi, vol. ۱, pg. ۹۸ مَا كُنْتُ أَعْ_بُدُ رَبًّا لَمْ أَرَهُ.

۳- Surat al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۱۵: فَأَيْنَ_نَمَا تَوَلُّو فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ

۴- Sharh Mi'ah Kalimah, pg. ۵۲; Matlub Kulli Talib, pg. ۳; 'Uyun al-Hikam wa al-Mawa'izh, pg. ۴۱۵: لَوْ كُشِفَ الْغِطَاءُ مَا ازْدَدْتُ يَقِيناً.

only two elements: the veiled and the subject from whom the matter in question is hidden.

Obscurity in the latter case is the result of the intensity of the brightness of the veiled, or more accurately as the result of the weakness of perception on the part of the subject. As an analogy, one is incapable of seeing the sun in some cases, because of an obstacle, such as a wall or dust, or at other times because of the intense brightness of the sun, which is actually the result of the weakness of one's vision.

A poet has said: "The veil that conceals Your face is Your face, at all times; You are hidden from the world as You are so manifest."

Between Allah (awj) and His creatures, there are no obstacles except His creatures.(۱) If the human being succeeds in removing the veils of darkness, of egocentrism, and of desire, only then can he turn to removing the veils of light.

It is for this that in the Sha'baniyyah Supplication, one pleads to Allah (awj) for the rending of the veils of light.(۲) Other than the Prophet (ص) and the Ahlul Bayt (ع) no one is capable of rending all the veils of light. Of course, the core of the Divine Essence and Attributes is impregnable even to them.(۳) Therefore, they are themselves veils of light for viewing the Divine Essence and since a contingent being cannot escape being limited, they also gaze at Allah (awj) from the outlook of

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۱- al-Tawhid by Shaykh Saduq, pg. ۱۷۰: لَيسَ بَينَهُ وَ بَينَ خَلْقِهِ حِجَابٌ غَيرَ خَلْقِهِ...

۲- Mafatih al-Jinan: وَ أَنِرْ أَبْصَارَ قُلُوبِنَا بِضِيآءِ نَظَرِهَا إِلَيکَ حَتَّى تَخْرِقَ أَبْصَارُ الْقُلُوبِ حُجَبَ النُّورِ فَتَصِلَ إِلَى مَعْدِنِ الْعَظَمَهِ وَ...

۳- Surat Ali-'Imran (۳), Verse ۳۰: ﴿ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ ﴾

their own [limited] existences; "'Unqa(1) is not the game to be ensnared, so remove your net."

Hence, the knowledge of every knowing being is limited to the framework of its existence and to the extent that it lacerates the veils. Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) in this regard says, "The intellects will never have the capacity to reach to the core and circle of His Attributes. Nevertheless, there is no veil to obstruct anyone in comprehending the necessary level [of knowledge of Allah]."(2)

That is, on the one hand, all the existents of the world of contingency are Divine signs and as such serve as mirrors(3) reflecting a true image [of the Divine] but at the same time, they are not separable from the Divine. Basically, they have no other role but to reflect the beauty of the Divine, although "children" [i.e. intellectually and spiritually immature persons] might perceive them as separate entities.

On the other hand, "[those standing at] the apices of [intellectual] resolve cannot comprehend Him, and [those who have] dived in [the depths of] acuity cannot reach Him."(4) His Essence neither yields to the intellection of the sage(5), neither to the spiritual experience of the gnostic(6), thus they both admit their incapability. This incapability arises because comparing what a contingent being can comprehend of Allah (awj) with what it cannot comprehend is to compare finitude with infinity.

At the end, the point that must be mentioned is that in the Islamic corpus of narrations there is mention of

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۱- A giant but beautiful bird in Persian mythology, also called Simurgh. In this line of poetry however, it is a metaphor for comprehending the core of Divine Essence. (Tr.)

۲- Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon ۴۹: ... لَمْ يَطَّلِعِ الْعُقُولَ عَلى تَحْدِيدِ صِفَتِهِ. وَلَمْ يَحْجُبْهَا عَنْ وَاجِبِ مَعْرِفَتِهِ...

۳- In his debate with 'Imran al-Abi'i, Imam al-Rida (ع) says: "Neither He is in the creation nor is the creation in Him. Just like the mirror: neither you are in it nor it in you. And the mirror is not like a mirage that portrays a deceptive view. At the same time, it has no truth in it other than the image of the person standing in front of it." Al-

Tawhid of Shaykh as-Sadiq, pp., ۴۳۴-۴۳۵

۴- Nahj al-Balaghah, First Sermon: ...لَايُدْرِكُهُ بُعْدُ الْهِمَمِ وَ لَايَنَالُهُ غَوْصُ الْفِطَنِ...

۵- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۱ pg. ۲۱, no. ۱: مَا عَرَّفْنَاکَ حَقَّ مَعْرِفَتِکَ.

۶- Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. ۸ pg. ۱۴۶: مَا عَبَدْنَاکَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِکَ.

an innate knowledge of Allah (awj). Innate knowledge is of the intuitive, presential .knowledge, which was explicated previously

There are two types of innate qualities in the human being: innate understandings (which every human being possesses prior to any education) and innate inclinations (which are part and parcel of the nature of every human being). The former are referred to as "innate knowledge of Allah (awj)" and the latter as "innate worship of ".Allah

But, as mentioned previously, they are not present at a conscious level of the human mind so as to render a rational endeavour [to understand Allah (awj)] unnecessary. Nevertheless, since knowledge of Allah (awj) is innate, the arguments presented in favour of Allah (awj) serve actually as reminders and not real proofs. In the process of proving something, one realizes that he has acquired a knowledge which he formerly lacked. But being reminded is to become aware that one has had something all along, albeit unknowingly. Thus it is that in Qur`anic verses and in narrations, what is always mentioned is the removal of the veils of obliviousness. And what rids one of a state of .obliviousness is a reminder not a proof

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

Question ۴: Misguidance from Allah

point

?Question: What is the meaning of Allah's (awj) misguidance in the Qur`an

Misguidance is a non-existent entity. Since guidance means to lead someone to a goal, then misguidance is the absence of guidance. In the parlance of the logicians, the relation between guidance and misguidance is privatives and positives ('Adam wa malakah). In

other words, if guidance were to exist in a certain place, then it is impossible for misguidance to exist there (from the same aspect); but if guidance were not there .then the absence of guidance is misguidance

Because of this it is not possible to attribute misguidance to Allah (awj) since it is not possible to give or take something that does not exist. Unlike guidance, which relates both to existence and the law, misguidance relates only to existence and has no relation with the law. This is because Allah (awj) is essentially the Guide, since if this were not the case then the evildoers would bring an excuse before Allah (awj) saying, ".“We wanted your guidance but you lead us astray

Therefore, at the outset, Allah (awj) leads everyone towards felicity, happiness and the right path and in this stage there can be no misguidance. But if someone wilfully does not accept this call and turns his back towards it, then in this case he incurs Allah’s (awj) existential misguidance. Therefore Allah’s (awj) misguiding someone simply means that He cuts off His guidance from him and leaves him to fend for himself, the result of which is that man becomes lost on the path of guidance. Man’s being lost then, is caused by not having Allah’s (awj) guidance - and this is the .meaning of existential misguidance

When we pay attention to the verses of the Noble Book, we find that there are two kinds of Divine guidance: one that

is related to the law and the second that is related to existence. Man has both kinds of guidance. This is in contrast to misguidance, which is only existential and does not exist with relation to the Law. This is because Allah (awj) is essentially the Guide, since it is impossible that He be essentially the Lord, the Worshipped, and the Refuge, but not be the Essential Guide. If this were not the case then the evildoers would bring forth an excuse, saying to Allah (awj), “We wanted your guidance but you lead us ”.astray

It is impossible for Allah (awj) to lead someone astray initially since this goes against His wisdom and since nothing comes from Allah (awj) except goodness and mercy, He does not lead anyone on an incorrect path from the outset. Rather, His misguidance is a type of punishment. In other words the bad people have gone astray and have been afflicted with misguidance by there own choice. Therefore in reality, initial misguidance is ascribed to the creatures, and the misguidance that is a punishment .pertains to the Creator

In conclusion we can say that Allah’s (awj) misguidance means that He cuts off His mercy and blessings from a person and leaves him to fend for himself; and it is this that results in man becoming lost on the Path. If someone does not accept the guidance of the Law, Allah (awj) will exclude him from His existential guidance. In other words, it is the actions of a

disbeliever or an oppressor which cause him not to have Divine guidance. This is in line with the order of creation, which is based on cause and effect. Consequently Allah (awj) has said that He will not guide the unbeliever(۱), oppressor(۲), or the sinner.(۳)

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

Question ۵: Being Allah's Servant

point

Question: Who is a "slave" and what is slavery? How can we become the slaves of Allah (awj)?

A true servant of Allah (awj) is he for whom obedience to Allah (awj) is sweet and Allah's (awj) love is delight; he is intimate with Allah (awj) and relies on Him for all his needs.

Servitude can be summed up in three things. First is that the servant doesn't consider himself to own any of what has been bestowed upon him, for slaves own no property. They see all property as Allah's (awj) and when He commands, they spend it; second, a servant doesn't plan for himself; and third, a servant is preoccupied only with Allah's (awj) prescriptions and proscriptions.

With the aforementioned definition, we can understand the essence of servitude and how to achieve it. Servitude is the key to sanctity and "servant" is the best of names. A perfected human is a servant of Allah (awj) and is effaced in the Divine Identity and the Divine Names.

Worship ('Ibadah), has been defined by lexicographers as utmost of modesty and humility. They say since "'ibadah" (worship) is the highest level of humility; it wouldn't be fitting except towards the highest being, possessing the greatest perfections and the highest level

١- ...وَاللَّهُ لاَ يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ: Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ٢٦٤. See also: Surat al-Ma'idah (٥), Verse ٦٧; Surat al-Tawbah (٩), Verse ٣٧

٢- ...وَاللَّهُ لاَ يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ: Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ٢٥٨. See also: Surat Ali-'Imran (٣), Verse ٨٦; Surat al-Ma'idah (٥), Verse ٥١

٣- ...وَاللَّهُ لاَ يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ: Surat Ali- 'Imran (٣), Verse ٨٦. See also: Surat al-Ma'idah (٥), Verse ١٠٨; Surat al-Tawbah (٩), Verse ٨٠

of generosity. This is why worshiping other than Allah (awj) is false worship .tantamount to polytheism, especially since sincerity in worship hasn't materialized

has explained, the word 'abd is composed (ع) As Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq of three letters: 'ayn, ba', and dal. "'Ayn" indicates 'ilm, knowledge and certainty that a servant has of Allah. The "ba'" indicates bu'd, the separation and distance he has from (other than Allah. And the letter "dal" points to dunuw, his closeness to Allah.(١

The slave is indebted to Allah (awj) for not only all of his perfections, but indeed for his very existence. It is because of this that he submits to Him. By not looking at himself and his own desires, he takes on the colour of his Master and His perfections to the The true slave of Allah" ,(ص) extent that according to the saying of the Noble Prophet Almighty is he for whom the obedience and love of Allah becomes sweet. He presents his needs to his Lord and becomes intimate with Him. He puts all his trust in Him and (has hope in no one else."(٢

the reality of ,(ع) According to the saying of Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq slavery is in three thing, the first is the fact that "The slave does not think that he owns anything that Allah has given him. This is because slaves do not own anything for themselves. They consider all their wealth to belong to Allah. They place whatever they have wherever Allah

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١ - ٢ Misbah al-Shari'ah, chapter: وَحُرُوفُ الْعَبْدِ ثَلَاثَةٌ (ع ب د) فَالْعَيْنُ عِلْمُهُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْبَاءُ بَوْنُهُ عَمَّنْ سِوَاهُ وَالدَّالُ دُنُوُّهُ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى بِلَا كَيْفٍ وَلَا حِجَابٍ.

٢- Arba'in

tells them to. The second is the fact that the slave of Allah does not weigh what is good and bad for himself. Thirdly, he spends all his activity in that which Allah had commanded him to do, and does not do what He has forbidden him from. Because he does not consider himself to own what Allah (awj) has given him, giving it away is easy .for Him

Since the slave of Allah (awj) has relegated his affairs to Allah (awj), the problems of the world become easy for him. And since he spends all his time doing what Allah (awj) has told him to do or staying away from what he has been prohibited from; he has no time left to be ostentatious. Thus, Allah (awj) honours His slave by means of these three things and by means of this, his response to Satan's challenges and his interaction with the other creatures of Allah (awj) becomes easy. He does not go after the world in order to hoard wealth or show off in front of people. He does not seek any wealth and power that he sees in the hands of others, nor does he spend his days in (vain pursuits."(١)

Slavery is the key to sanctity. The title "slave" is the best of titles and it is because of this that the name of the Prophet (ص) was 'Abdullah and on the night of ascension he .asked Allah (awj) to grant him servanthood

The perfect man is the servant

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۱ – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱, pg. ۲۲۴, no. ۱۷: أَنْ لاَ يَرَى الْعَبْدُ لِنَفْسِهِ فِيمَا خَوَّلَهُ اللَّهُ مِلْكاً لِأَنَّ الْعَبِيدَ لاَ يَكُونُ لَهُمْ مِلْكٌ يَرَوْنَ الْمَالَ مَالَ اللَّهِ يَضَعُونَهُ حَيْثُ أَمَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ وَ لاَ يُدَبِّرُ الْعَبْدُ لِنَفْسِهِ تَدْبِيراً وَ جُمْلَهُ اشْتِغَالِهِ فِيمَا أَمَرَهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ وَ نَهَاهُ عَنْهُ فَإِذَا لَمْ يَرَ الْعَبْدُ لِنَفْسِهِ فِيمَا خَوَّلَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مِلْكاً هَانَ عَلَيْهِ الإِنْفَاقُ فِيمَا أَمَرَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَنْ يُنْفِقَ فِيهِ وَ إِذَا فَوَّضَ الْعَبْدُ تَدْبِيرَ نَفْسِهِ عَلَى مُدَبِّرِهِ هَانَ عَلَيْهِ مَصَائِبُ الدُّنْيَا وَ إِذَا اشْتَغَلَ الْعَبْدُ بِمَا أَمَرَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى وَ نَهَاهُ لاَ يَتَفَرَّغُ مِنْهُمَا إِلَى الْمِرَاءِ وَ الْمُبَاهَاهِ مَعَ النَّاسِ فَإِذَا أَكْرَمَ اللَّهُ الْعَبْدَ بِهَذِهِ الثَّلاَثَهِ هَانَ عَلَيْهِ الدُّنْيَا وَ إِبْلِيسُ وَ الْخَلْقُ وَ لاَ يَطْلُبُ الدُّنْيَا تَكَاثُراً وَ تَفَاخُراً وَ لاَ يَطْلُبُ مَا عِنْدَ النَّاسِ عِزّاً وَ عُلُوّاً وَ لاَ يَدَعُ أَيَّامَهُ بَاطِلاً.

of Allah. He has all the manifestations of Divine Names. He is effaced in the Divine .Essence

The lexicographers have defined worship as the pinnacle of humility. They have said that since worship is the highest level of humility, it does not befit anyone other than one who holds the highest levels of existence, perfection, grace, and generosity. Because of this, the worship of other than Allah (awj) is false worship that is .tantamount to polytheism

Worship has three levels: Some people worship Allah (awj) with the hope of getting other worldly rewards or because they fear His punishment(١) - these are the ordinary believers; some worship Allah in order to gain the honour of servanthood and so that Allah (awj) calls them His slave; some however, worship Allah (awj) .because they are in awe of His Might and because they love Him

It has been related in a sacred tradition that Allah (awj) said, "Oh my slave! Worship me so that I make you like Myself. I say to something, 'Be,' and it is, you will also say (to something 'be' and it will become so."(٢

,(ع) Therefore, according to a saying of Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (Servanthood is a substance, the kernel of which is Lordship."(٣"

By means of worship, man's soul becomes like a polished mirror in which the Divine lights are reflected. The more it is polished the more will it reflect the flashes of Divine illumination; until such a time that his potential for sanctity

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١- Nahjul Balaghah, Short saying ٢٣٧; al-Kafi, vol. ٢, pg. ٨۴, no. ۵: عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: اَلْعِبَادُ ثَلَاثَهٌ قَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَوْفاً فَتِلْکَ عِبَادَهُ الْعَبِیدِ وَقَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ تَبَارَکَ وَتَعَالَی طَلَبَ الثَّوَابِ فَتِلْکَ عِبَادَهُ الأَجْرَاءِ وَقَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حُبًّا لَهُ فَتِلْکَ عِبَادَهُ الأَحْرَارِ وَهِیَ أَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَه.

٢- Kalimatollah, pg. ١۴٠, no.١۵۴: عَبْدِی أَطِعْنِی حَتَّی أَجْعَلَکَ مِثْلِی أَقُولُ لِلشَیْءٍ کُنْ فَیَکُونَ تَقُولَ لِلشَیْءٍ کُنْ فَیَکُونَ.

٣- Misbah al-Shari'ah, chapter ٢: أَلْعِبَادَهُ جَوْهَرَهٌ کُنْهُهَا الرُّبُوبِیَّهُ...

will change to actuality and he will become the vicegerent of Allah (awj) in the whole realm of existence. You should know that this is not lordship but it is a vicegerency and a representation in which the effects of lordship become manifested.

The vicegerent of Allah (awj) does not do the work Allah (awj) does. Allah (awj) rather accomplishes his work at the hands of His vicegerent. Through the lattice of the soul of this person, He manifests Himself and reveals His Names and Attributes. Because of this the divine Gnostic is the perfect mirror for the power and grace of Allah (awj).

In all the types and degrees of the miracles of the prophets and the Imams (ع), in reality, it is Allah (awj) who is the absolute agent while the soul of the saint has been effaced in His will. This is the station of servanthood - a station that can be obtained by means of obeying Allah (awj).

The spiritual wayfarer considers himself to be the name of Allah (awj) in this station, to be effaced in Allah (awj) as he recognizes other beings to be the same. If he be a perfect saint, he will become the perfect name of Allah (awj) and apply in himself perfect and absolute servanthood.

In the Noble Qur`an, Allah (awj) says,

"Glory be to He who took his servant on the night journey."(١)

This indicates the fact that travelling the path to Allah's (awj) nearness can only be achieved

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١- ﴿ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِی أَسْرَی بِعَبْدِهِ... ﴾ Surat al-Isra' (١٧), Verse ١:

by means of servitude. One must forego the pride and haughtiness that comes with .presumptions of independence

In the tashahhud first we give witness to the Prophet's servanthood, then to his prophethood. This is because servanthood is the ladder by means of which he ascended to the station of prophethood. In the Salat, which is the night ascension of .the believer, we start with the "bismillah" that is the reality of servanthood

Intention, according to the general public, means the desire to obey Allah (awj) whether that be out of greed or fear. "They call on their Lord, greedily and out of fear." According to those with wisdom it is the desire to worship Allah (awj) out of respect and in order to acknowledge his greatness. "Worship Allah as if you were seeing Him. ".If you are not seeing Him, verily, He sees you

According to those with the love of Allah (awj), it is the desire to obey Allah (awj) out of love for His essence. Finally, near the Friends of Allah (awj) it means to intend to obey Him and worship Him as an effect of witnessing the beauty of the Beloved, independently and essentially, and to be annihilated in the Lord, essentially, in His attributes and in His actions. One of the most important conditions of intention is .sincerity

Sincerity of intention, in the general public's worship, is purifying one's intention of both patent and hidden polytheism, which include such traits as ostentation, self-.conceit, and pride

Now, surely, sincere obedience"

is due to Allah."(1)

In the worship of The High-ranking, however, it is to purify one's intention from any trace of greed or fear which in their mode of wayfaring is considered polytheism. In the worship of The Possessors of Heart (ashab al-qulub), it is to purify one's intentions from egoism which is the greatest polytheism and disbelief in their mode. In the worship of The Most Perfect, it is purifying one's intention of noticing the station of servitude and the act of worship, and further yet noticing the existence. As Imam Khomeini said, "The healthy heart is the one which meets The Truth, without anything else disturbing their intimacy."(2)

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

Question 6: Nearness to Allah

point

Question: What is nearness to Allah (awj)? How many different kinds of nearness are there? How can we gain nearness to Allah (awj)?

In lexicographical terms, "qurb" means the nearness of one thing to another. This can be in space or time. Because of this it is said that something from a spatial point of view is near another thing. Or it is said that yesterday is, from a temporal point of view, closer to today than two days before yesterday. In another common usage, "qurb" means being the centre of attention of someone and to hold a special place near them.

Brief Answer

point

In lexicographical terms, "qurb" means the nearness of one thing to another. This can be in space or time. Of course in commonplace usage, "qurb" also applies to being the centre of attention and to holding a special place near

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۱- ﴿ أَلاَ لِلَّهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ ﴾ Surat al-Zumar (۳۹), Verse ۳:

۲- Farsi Version) Sirr al-Salat, pg. ۷۵)

.someone

In philosophical terms there are three types of nearness: spatio-temporal, essential (i.e. pertaining to quiddity), and existential. Spatio-temporal nearness however is particular to the different parts of the material world. Since Allah (awj) is not matter, .this type of nearness does not apply in regards to Him

Essential nearness, or nearness in quiddity, is like the nearness person a and person b have as humans, as they possess the same quiddity—being of the same species. Allah (awj), however, is unlimited and therefore without quiddity. Without quiddity, this .sense of nearness will not pertain to Allah (awj) either

Since Allah (awj) bestows existence to all beings and separation between a complete cause and its effect is impossible considering the fact that an effect is a mere link and relation to its cause, we can conclude that the nearness of Allah (awj) to His creation is .existential nearness

Allah's (awj) nearness to things

:There are four groups of verses regarding Allah's (awj) nearness to us

;a. Verses stating His nearness to us in principle

;b. Verses holding that He is nearer to us than any other being

;c. Verses saying that He is nearer to man than his jugular vein

.d. Verses saying that He is nearer to man than man himself

In explaining the fourth group of verses, we must say that man, like all other contingent beings, is a hollow being—empty of any and all aspects of independent existence. Thus, Allah's (awj) existential encompassment and comprehension lies .between man and himself

Nearness to Allah (awj) in philosophical terms

It is clear that Allah (awj) is not in any particular

place, so that there could be a direction to get near Him by moving in that direction. Nearness to Allah (awj) is achieved through man strengthening his existential aspect to the extent that he begins to self-consciously manifest the Divine Attributes. In the movement towards salvation, the more man's existential perfects increase, the more .the levels of nearness to Allah (awj) increase

Nearness to Allah (awj) in light of the Islamic tradition

Since Allah (awj) is close to everything, man must try to approach Allah (awj) through righteous deeds. These deeds are divided into two categories: compulsory and advisory. Deeds holding a key position in the first category are understanding and sincerity in actions, while the rest, including humility, good morals, and generosity, fall .under the category of advisory deeds

Detailed Answer

Types of nearness in philosophical terms

In philosophical terms there are three types of nearness: spatio-temporal, essential (i.e. pertaining to quiddity), and existential. Nearness and distance are things whose existence depends on two things. A and B should both exist in order for us to say that A is near B or is far from it. In the metaphysical realm in which immaterial beings exist that are free from motion and time, spatial and temporal nearness cannot apply. This is especially true in regards to the Reality of all realities and the unlimited existence "He is an absolute to whom we cannot point (spatially or temporally or otherwise) nor (can He enter our imagination."(١

Since Allah (awj) is free from quiddity(٢), He can not share a quiddity with anything else nor be near to anything in this respect. This

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١- Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ١٨۶: وَلاَ صَمَدَهُ مَنْ أَشَارَ إِلَيْهِ وَ تَوَهَّمَهُ.

٢- Quiddity is defined as "the limits of existence," thus special only to contingent beings {i.e. dependant beings}. Allah (awj) on the other hand, being a necessary

.being, has no limit, thus defying quiddity

is because quiddity here means genus and differentia (when quiddity is opposed to existence). But Allah (awj) admits of no delimitation or definition such that another quiddity be near or far from Him. "He who points to Him has limited Him and he who limits Him counts Him."(1)

Two things that are partners in or share one quiddity are like one another. Zayd and 'Amr for instance share the quiddity of Man. Allah (awj) however is above and beyond having a like or an opposite.

In regards to connection in existential terms we can say that: Because Allah (awj) is the source of all existence and because the separation of the cause from the effect is impossible, therefore nearness can be envisioned as nearness in existential terms (although it must be noted that to speak in terms of cause and effects does not adequately convey the relationship here, since all things "other-than-God" are but so many manifestations of His one existence),

"And when my servants ask you concerning me, tell them I am near."(2)

Things are, in their essence(3), pure relations to Allah (awj). Until the cause is understood, the effect cannot be understood. Therefore the nearness Allah (awj) has to creatures is an existential nearness. There can be no existence except that Allah (awj) is its cause, and any effect stands by means of its cause. Therefore there cannot be a form of nearness nearer than this nearness.

Allah's (awj) nearness to things

In regards to the nearness of Allah (awj) to things, the verses of the

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۱- Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon ۱: مَنْ أَشَارَ إِلَيْهِ فَقَدْ حَدَّهُ وَ مَنْ حَدَّهُ فَقَدْ عَدَّهُ.

۲- Surat al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۸۶: وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ

۳- That is to say, all contingent beings are dependent and lack any sort of independence. All they have is for their existence is a "shadow" existence. A shadow has no existence of itself. All of its existence depends on the object having the

shadow. All existents "other-than-God" are but as shadows of that perfect Being. Of course, the similitude in question here is the dependence of the shadow on the object. Other characteristics of the example, such as the object being material, are not .meant

.Qur`an can be divided into four categories

:a. One group state His nearness per se: that Allah (awj) is near us

(Verily I am near, I answer the caller."(۱"

:b. A second group of verses state that He is relatively nearer to man than others

(We are nearer to him than you but you do not see."(۲"

:c. Another type of verse indicates that He is closer to man than his jugular vein

Verily we created man and we know what his soul whispers. And We are closer to" (him than his jugular vein."(۳

d. A fourth group state that Allah (awj) is closer to man than man himself, like the :following verse

O you who believe, answer Allah and the Prophet when they call you to what will give" (you life. Know that Allah stands between man and his heart."(۴

Discussions about the first three groups are not very difficult but the fourth group cannot be solved so easily. How can Allah (awj) be closer to man than himself? Because of this, some commentaries, in line with some traditions have explained this as the intermediation of Allah's (awj) power. They say that the meaning of the verse is that sometimes man decides to do something, then Allah (awj) makes him regret it (and does not allow him to continue with his plan.(۵

This is an intermediate meaning, one step removed from the apparent meaning, but if we have a rational proof that supports the apparent meaning of the verse, then

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۱- : Surat al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۸۶ ...فَإِنِّی قَرِیبٌ أُجِیبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ...

۲- : Surat al-Waqi'ah (۵۶), Verse ۸۵ وَ نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَیْهِ مِنْکُمْ وَلُکِنْ لَّا تُبْصِرُونَ

۳- : Surat Qaf (۵۰), Verse ۱۶ وَ نَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَیهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِیدِ

۴- ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ... ﴾ :Surat al-Anfal (۸), Verse ۲۴

۵- Majma' al-Bayan, vol. ۴, pg. ۴۵۲

we have no reason for foregoing the apparent meaning of the verse (that God comes between man and himself). Man is not whole (samad), rather he is like other possible beings "empty"; as Kulayni has related in a tradition, "Verily Allah created man (empty."(1)

Now that man is empty, the comprehensiveness of the existence of Allah (awj) comes between man and himself. Therefore, Allah (awj) is near everything. If Allah (awj) is near, He is near with all of His attributes. This is because the essential attributes(2) of Allah (awj) are one with His essence. Now, if His essential attributes are present, then .His attributes of action will also be active following His essential attributes

The way to get closer to Allah (awj) in a philosophical view

One of the fundamental questions that can be asked in this regard is, "How can we become closer to Allah (awj)?"—that Being, the light of whose existence has illuminated the Heavens and the Earth, an illumination that is the same as creation and the eternal creative act. From what direction should we approach Him and in what direction should we seek to become near to Him? It is clear that Allah (awj) does not have a direction, hence the journey along the path to Allah (awj) actually takes .place within the very being of the wayfarer

In the process of perfecting his essence, when the wayfarer travels from creation to the Real and travels from the material intellect(3) to the active intellect, he communes with the Names and attributes of Allah (awj). In other words he attains his

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۱- al-Kafi, vol. ۶, pg. ۲۸۶: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ خَلَقَ ابْنَ آدَمَ أَجْوَفَ.
۲- Allah (awj) attributes are of two kinds. Essential Attributes (or Entitative Attributes). Attributes for whose derivation and conceptualization, bringing to mind Allah's (awj) essence is enough; attributes like knowledge, power, life, etc. Action-Related Attributes (or Operative Attributes). Attributes for whose derivation, bringing to mind Allah's (awj) essence is not enough. We need to bring to mind His essence in its modality of action and operation within creation; attributes like creativeness,

.forgivingness, bestowing sustenance, etc

Philosophers divide the intellect into four levels. Material or Passive Intellect - ٣ (passive intellect or nous pateticos). In this stage, the intellect is at a potential state of understanding. Intellect by Proficiency. In this stage, the intellect understands the self-evident concepts and judgments. Active or Agent Intellect (intellectus agens or nous poietikos). The stage when the intellect understands concepts or judgments needing speculative reasoning through self-evident concepts and judgments. Acquired Intellect. This is the stage when the intellect understands all self-evident concepts and judgments and those needing speculative reasoning corresponding to the metaphysical and physical worlds in such manner that it keeps them present and .is actually attentive of them

felicity. The depth and faculties of his existence are strengthened and he becomes one of Allah's (awj) great signs or manifestations. He thus attains the state of sanctity ".(and Divine vicegerency. This spiritual state can be called "nearness to Allah (awj

Nearness to Allah from the view point of Qur`an and Hadith

Because Allah (awj) encompasses all things(١), it does not make sense that He be distant from something. Therefore, the nearness of Allah (awj) to His servant is true in all cases and situations. Conversely, it is not always the case that man is always close to Allah and it is a state that man must strive to obtain. Therefore if man wants to become closer to Allah (awj) and to strengthen this relationship, he should obtain the nearness to Allah (awj) by means of good actions and obedience to Allah (awj) as has said, "Nearness to Allah can only be found (ع) Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir through obedience to Him."(٢) In doing this, he enters the beginning of spiritual .(vicegerency or the succour of Allah (awj

It has been related that "Prayer is the nearness of every pious person"(٣) and concerning the religious tax it has been related that "the zakat (has been made) with the prayers a means of nearness."(۴) These are things that bring one close to Allah .((awj

When this nearness is achieved, man becomes the friend of Allah (awj) and Allah (awj) becomes the friend of man. Verses such as the following clearly point to this two-way :friendship

.If you love Allah, follow me"

١- ﴿ أَلَا إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُحِيطٌ ﴾ Surat al-Fussilat (۴١), Verse ۵۴:

٢- يَا جَابِرُ! وَاللّٰهِ مَا يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلـىٰ اللّٰهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالـىٰ إِلَّا بِالطَّاعَهِ. :al-Kafi, vol. ٢, pg. ٧۴

٣- الصَّلوٰةُ قُرْبَانُ كُلِّ تَقِيٍّ. :Man La Yahdhuruhu al-Faqih, vol. ١, pg. ٢١٠

۴- ثُمَّ إِنَّ الزَّكَاهَ جُعِلَتْ مَعَ الصَّلَاهِ قُرْبَاناً. :Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon ١٩٩

(It will make Allah love you…"(1)

Performing all those actions that in principle bring you close to Allah (awj) is the means to Allah's (awj) nearness provided that man performs them for Allah (awj). In other words, these actions must not only be good in themselves, but they must be carried out in the best way and with the proper intentions (i.e. goodness of both act and agent .(is required

As to the acts, they are of two kinds: obligatory and recommended. Just as reaching heaven has obligations and recommended acts, so too reaching the highest degrees of humanity (that in itself is a type of heaven) has its obligations and recommended actions. Understanding and sincerity both have great bearing in this regard and can be considered mutually necessary to the extent that when understanding increases .sincerity also increases

On the other hand, the Qur`an considers actions to be a means of reaching understanding(2). Of course, the understanding and certain knowledge thus obtained is not the certainty with respect to Allah (awj), since the former certainty is the cause of worship and not, as in the case of the latter certainty, the highest effect and product of worship. The latter certainty is the certainty of Allah (awj) and the .knowledge of Him in all His unlimited attributes

The remainder of the moral methods that lead to nearness can be considered as has said, "Amongst the (ع) recommended. As Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq things that Allah revealed to prophet Dawud was

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۱- Surat Ali-'Imran (۳), Verse ۳۱: قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ...

۲- Surat al-Hijr (۱۵), Verse ۹۹: وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

this, ‘O Dawud, just as humble people are the nearest people to Allah, the proud ones (are the farthest people from Allah.”(١)

It is clear, however, that humility and good morals or kindness are recommended or secondary acts in obtaining nearness to Allah (awj) whereas the primary principle remains understanding and the worship of Allah (awj). In the words of the Noble Prophet (ص) “O Abu Dharr, worship Allah as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.”(٢) In other words, your knowledge and understanding should be “presential” or intuitive and direct knowledge.

Question ٧: Friends of Allah not having Fear

point

Question: The Qur`an mentions the fact that there is no fear or sadness for the friends of Allah (Surat Yunus (١٠), Verse ۶٢). If this is the case, then why do we read the following prayer in the Du’a of Friday (addressing Imam al-Zaman (ع)): “Peace be upon you O Pure one who is afraid!”

Fear is of two types: praiseworthy and blameworthy. Blameworthy fear, like fearing for ones’ life or fearing people and creatures is meaningless for the friends of Allah (awj). This is why Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) has been narrated to have said “A believer fears no one other than Allah.” As the Noble Qur`an says “It is only Satan who frightens his followers. Do not fear him but fear Me if you believe.” Praiseworthy fear is fearing the majesty and greatness of Allah (awj). In this regard, the Noble Prophet (ص) has been narrated to have said

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١ - Muntakhab Mizan al-Hikmah, no.۵٢١٢: يَا دَاوُدَا! كَمَا أَنَّ أَقْرَبَ النَّاسِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْمُتَوَاضِعُونَ كَذٰلِكَ أَبْعَدُ النَّاسِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ.

٢ - Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٧٧, pg. ٧۴: يَا أَبَا ذَرَّ! اعْبُدِ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ كُنْتَ لَا تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ.

".He who knows his Lord more, fears Him more"

Praiseworthy fear is attributed to high-ranking wayfarers which is caused by feeling the greatness and majesty of the Lord and the manifestation of His attributes. This fear is a spiritual delight and doesn't conflict with the verse "Know that the friends of Allah have no fear, nor are they sad." What's more, this type of fear is one of the perfections that the perfected individuals obtain. This is why we address the Twelfth as so: "Peace be upon you O Pure One who fears the greatness of Allah (ع) Imam ".Almighty

There are two kinds of fear: good and bad. The bad fear does not pertain to the saints and the friends of Allah (awj). This is the fear of people, the enemy, etc. In short it is .the fear of creatures

It has been related from Abu Dharr that he said, "The Noble Prophet advised me saying 'In the path of Allah, do not fear any one who mocks you or discourages that he (ع) you."(۱) Also, it has been related from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq ,said, "The believers fear no one but Allah."(۲) As the Qur`an has said

This is the Devil that scares his friends by means of his rumours. If you have faith,' (fear Me, do not fear them."(۳

The good fear, which is praiseworthy, is the fear of the greatness of Allah (awj). As has said, "Fear is the clothing of (ع) Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۷۱ pg. ۳۶۰: وَ أَوْصَانِی أَنْ لَا أَخَافَ فِی اللَّهِ لَوْمَهَ لَائِمٍ.

۲- Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ۵۲۵۸: إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ وَلِیُّ اللَّهِ ... وَ لَا یَخَافُ غَیْرَهُ.

۳- Surat Ali-'Imran (۳), Verse ۱۷۵: إِنَّـــمَا ذٰلِکُمُ الشَّیْطَانُ یُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِیَآءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونِی إِنْ کُنْـتُمْ مُؤْمِنِینَ

has said, "Whoever (ص) those who know Allah."(۱) And as the Prophet of Allah (amongst you knows Allah more, fears Him more." (۲

It is because of this that the great Prophet has said, "My fear of Allah is more than any (of you."(۳

The fruit of this fear is the fact that man takes refuge with Allah (awj) as Imam 'Ali b. has said, "If you fear creatures, you flee from them but if you fear Allah (ع) Abi Talib (you take refuge in Him."(۴

As the great 'Arif, Khwaja 'Abdullah Ansari, has said, "The way-station of humility gives birth to that of fear. Allah says, 'He who fears the station of his Lord

(Then surly the garden is the abode].'(۵...]

Fear is the bastion of faith, the elixir of piety, and the weapon of the believer. Fear is of three types: the first is fleeting, the second is living, the third is overpowering. The fear that is fleeting comes into the heart and quickly leaves. That is a fear which if it does not exist, there is no faith. Whoever has more faith, has more fear. Another is the living fear. That fear prevents the slave from sins. It shortens the hopes of man. The third is the fear that overwhealms. It brings the reality of fear and opens the door to ethical behaviour. It is the fear of the artifice and ruse [of Allah]. It prevents man from being negligent of his guilt and becoming complacent. The signs

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۱- Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ۵۱۷۸: اَلْخَوْفُ جِلْبَابُ الْعَارِفِينَ.
۲- Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ۵۱۹۵: مَنْ كَانَ بِاللَّهِ أَعْرَفَ كَانَ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَخْوَفَ.
۳- Mi'raj al-Sa'adah
۴- Muntakhab Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ۲۰۰۰: إِذَا خِفْتَ الْخَالِقَ فَرَرْتَ إِلَيْهِ إِذَا خِفْتَ الْمَخْلُوقَ فَرَرْتَ مِنْهُ.
۵- Surat al-Nazi'at (۷۹), Verse ۴۰-۴۱: وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَى. فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى

which show that a man has fallen for a ruse and stratagem are ten things: worship without sweetness accompanying it; continuing to sin without repentance; closing the door of prayer; knowledge without action; wisdom without intention and will; talking without limits and controls; closing the door of humility; associating with bad people; and above all of these are giving faith to a servant without discrimination and leaving a servant to fend for himself. This is the fear of those who repent.

The reality of fear is that the spiritual wayfarer, because he has given up hope of reaching his goal or because he expects a bad thing to happen in the future, looses his composure.

According to the elevation of the stature of a wayfarer, fear can be divided into three parts:

The fear of common people: This is the fear of the punishment of Allah (awj). They fear the anger of their Lord. Allah (awj) says,

"They fear the day when the hearts and eyes are perplexed and confused."(١)

The fear of the mediocre: This is the fear of the Divine guile and artifice. Those who have hearts that tastes the presence of Allah (awj) and who continuously watch over their souls are punished with this type of fear. They always fear the fact that the grace of Allah (awj) could end for them and that the sweetness of Allah's (awj) presence could vanish. Those who have set foot in this way-station have themselves become subject to Divine Guile since they have

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١- Surat al-Nur (٢۴), Verse ٣٧: يَخَافُونَ يَوْماً تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالأَبْصَارُ

,left “the Giver” for His “gifts.” Allah (awj) says

(And for he who fears His Lord, there are two Gardens.”(1“

The fear of great souls who have living hearts: That means the acknowledgement of the greatness of Allah (awj). While witnessing the Beauty of Allah (awj), they also get a taste of His power. His beauty has showed itself to them with ultimate coyness and His honour has manifested itself with the show of self-sufficiency. Therefore the situation of the special friends of Allah (awj) differs from that of other people. The fear that occurs from witnessing the greatness of Allah (awj), and the manifestations of the Names of Allah (awj) unto their hearts, increases every moment. They are drowned in such spiritual pleasures. This fear doesn't contradict the verse of the :Qur`an that states

(Know that the friends of God have no fear nor are they sad.”(2“

Peace be upon you O Pure One who“ ,(ع) Because of this we say to Imam al-Zaman (fears the greatness of Allah, Almighty.”(3

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

?Question 8: Allah, Love or Fear

point

?Question: Should the remembrance of Allah (awj) evoke fear or love

The co-existence of fear and hope, and in some cases love, in respect to Allah (awj), should not be a source of confusion as this phenomenon permeates all relationships of love to varying degrees. However, because of its over-conspicuousness, we are blind to it. It must be noted that even as routine a matter as walking is the result of fear, hope, and love, for without hope we will not embark

١- Surat al-Rahman (۵۵), Verse ۴۶: ﴿وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتَانِ﴾

٢- Surat Yunus (١٠), Verse ۶٢: ﴿أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

٣- Mafatih al-Jinan, Ziyarat of Imam al-Mahdi (ع) on Fridays: أَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْمُهَذَّبُ الْخَائِفُ...

on walking, and without walking, we will not reach out destination, and without fear we will not exercise caution and thus will be hurt, and again will fail to reach our destination. This issue becomes all the more clear when using automobiles, electrical appliances, incendiaries, etc. for we take pleasure in using them, but if our usage is not contained and tempered by fear and caution, using them might end in our .destruction

Therefore, it is correct to say that one must fear Allah (awj), love Him, and have hope in Him all at the same time. For loving Him and having hope in Him will bring about harmony on the one hand, and will on the other hand, compel us to take action, struggle, and push forth in our endeavour to acquire the elements that will secure His satisfaction and ultimately lead to being blessed by His effusions, graces, and bounties in this world and the hereafter. His fear will evoke humility and servility; it will strengthen the spirit of obedience and preclude us from committing sins that might .otherwise incur Allah's (awj) wrath and chastisement

This coexistence of fear and hope in this world—the world of cultivation and striving which calls for being vigilant, for guarding the fruit [of our endeavours] so that we may benefit from them in the hereafter wherein there will be no need for caution as it is not the abode for cultivation and striving but that of harvesting—for ordinary people will lead to a serenity

in the hereafter which will be free of any trace of fear and anguish. Fear alone will entail despondency, spiritlessness and depression. Hope and love alone will result in being deceived by our base spirits, in boldness toward Allah (awj) and sin. Thus neither of the results of fear or hope is desirable when taken individually and without .being harnessed by the other

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

Fear, hope, and love are wijdani phenomena [i.e. they are experienced directly and intuitively and as such their comprehension does not rely on mental concepts or sensational experience] and thus are without need of being defined. The human being :experiences fear when faced with certain issues, such as

;a. When his life, property, reputation, etc. are endangered

;b. When overwhelmed by the grandeur of something or somebody

c. When he feels clueless regarding the outcome and repercussions of an action or his fate. Although, it must be noted that it is possible that in certain cases all these factors .be present

Likewise, the feeling of love and affection is evoked in response to certain factors, :such as

a. Finding certain attractive and beautiful aspects in the beloved such that one's attraction to the beloved is the entailment of one's fondness of the beauties that the beloved manifests. Traditional poets detest this love as being "in pursuit of the .veneer" and thus he who nurtures this love is condemned to disrepute

However, this is not a universal truth. If the beauties found in the beloved are passing, ephemeral, and superficial, the poet is

correct. But, if the beauties and perfections that the beloved possesses are of the nature of moral values or if those beauties and perfections are existential and real ones, the resulting love would not be merely "pursuit of the veneer" and disreputable; .rather its upshot would be harmony

b. The feeling of dependence on and need of the object of affection such that one intends to exploit that object of affection in pursuing one's aspirations. In this type of relationship, one is attracted to the object of affection for one's own sake and not for .the object's sake

c. The love that swells in one's heart as the result of feeling indebted to one's patron. In this relationship, the lover is attracted to the beloved as the result of the bounties and benevolence he has received from the beloved and as such is beholden to the .beloved

d. The beloved seeks the love of the lover and strives to captivate him in order to minister to the lover and to succour him. It is possible that more than one of the above .categories be involved in one case of love

If we examine the matter closely, we will notice that in all our actions and reactions fear, love, and hope are combined to various degrees. Although in some cases one of these factors might be the dominant and there is not always an equal balance, their coexistence is inevitable. However, this is one of the issues that is obscure to us due to

.its conspicuousness

Hope and love impel us to action both in our daily activities and in the risky tasks we undertake. Fear on the other hand restrains us so as to exercise caution, to assess the repercussions of our actions and to prepare the adequate preliminaries. Had we been only equipped with love, we would be reckless, which would have entailed our early destruction. And had fear been unrivalled, we would never undertake any action even such mundane things as drinking and eating, for there is always the risk of a .drop of water or a bite of food going down the wrong pipe, causing suffocation

Therefore, there should be no confusion as to the coexistence of fear, hope, and love regarding Allah (awj). And if there is, it is only another sign of our obliviousness to self-.knowledge and our psychic states

To explain this further: The existence of fear, hope, and love with regard to Allah (awj) in different people is proportionate to their knowledge of Allah (awj) and His Attributes of Beauty and of Majesty, their knowledge of the true religion, their past conduct, and .their assurance or lack of assurance regarding their future

Those who are captivated by the magnificence and grandeur of the Truth or have in the past sinned and have dishonoured the Divine presence—in their case, fear overshadows love and hope. But on the other side of the spectrum are those who are entranced by Divine Beauty and Mercy. They have experienced the Divine graces and

favours and have in the past been cautious of their conduct and have honoured the Divine presence and in instances where they did slip and commit sin, found the door back to Allah's (awj) favour and forgiveness, seized it, and thus made a genuine .repentance. In their case, love and hope overpower fear

But finally there are those who are midway between the two previously mentioned positions. That is, they are not sure of their prior deeds being accepted and are thus afraid of their future and the possibility of not being delivered from Divine punishment and chastisement but at the same time hold hope in Allah's (awj) forgiveness and generosity. In other words, their fear on the one hand and their hope and love on the .[other strike a balance [and so neither side weighs heavier

The important point is that in most cases, fear and love arise from one's innate self-interest and instinct of self-preservation. That is, most believers love Allah (awj) and have hope in Him due to their fear of Divine chastisement in the hereafter and the possibility of being deprived of Divine effusions, bounties, heavenly joys—the beautiful houris and the marvellous castles. But those who are enthralled by the beauty and perfection of Allah (awj) or are in awe of His magnificence, invincibility, and grandeur, or are affected by both, account only for a small number of the those who ,(ع) believers. Thus, with the exception of the prophets and the Imams have been able to

.achieve the latter stage have been very few

Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) defines these three groups in his legacy of wisdom as follows: “One group worships Allah in hope of boons and benevolence – such is the worship of businessmen; another group worships him out of fear – such is the worship of slaves; and yet another group worships Allah out of gratitude – such is the worship of those who are free of themselves and of self-worship.”(1)

It is for this reason that some prominent scholars state that one of the fundamentals of Islamic pedagogy is love. The Noble Qur`an, the great source of Islamic morals, introduces love as the fulcrum of moral virtues. Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) says, “Allah the Immaculate disciplined and trained his Prophet through love.”(2)

The topics of warning (takhwif) and encouragement (tashwiq) permeate the Qur`an and the narrations of the Ahlul Bayt (ع). However, these two principles are the final stage for the weak believers, but as for the intermediate believers, they constitute the means and the preliminary stage. The believer starts the journey, being spurred forth by warning and encouragement but gradually the compelling force transforms to love.

Hence one need not be confused regarding the coexistence of fear and love in relation to Allah (awj). This coexistence of fear and hope is necessary for the spiritual training, elevation and development of the human being. For fear prevents us from sinning, from bringing destruction to ourselves, and from incurring Divine wrath and

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۱- Nahj al-Balaghah, short saying ۲۳۷: قَالَ (ع): إِنَّ قَوْماً عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَغْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ التُّجَّارِ، وَإِنَّ قَوْماً عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَهْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيدِ، وَإِنَّ قَوْماً عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ شُكْراً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَحْرَارِ

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۷ pg. ۳: أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ النَّحْوِيِّ قَالَ: دَخَلْتُ عَلَى أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) فَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ أَدَّبَ نَبِيَّهُ عَلَى مَحَبَّتِهِ.

chastisement, which in turn leads to greater humility and firmer obedience to Allah (awj). Love, on the other hand, compels one to undertake the obligatory rituals and the supererogatory prayers with enthusiasm and to hasten in achieving the means to .Divine grace, mercy, and bounties

In short, the fruit of the marriage of fear and hope in the human being are hastening to do good, to implant in oneself the moral virtues, and to avoid evil and sin, which constitute the ultimate goal of human creation intended by Allah (awj); that is, to paint ourselves with the colour of the Divine, attaining the station of Divine viceroyalty, reclining in the bounties of the hereafter, and to rid ourselves of all anxiety and (anguish. And this has been expressed time and again in the Qur`an.(١)

Fear alone [uncoupled with hope and love] will entail gloominess, depression, hopelessness, neglect of repentance, and sinking into the whirlpool of sin, being .overwhelmed with the misfortunes of this world and the hereafter, etc

Love alone leads to impudence and shamelessness in committing sins with the false hope of repentance in the latter years of life, and unwarranted expectance of Divine grace and mercy, while one should not expect to benefit from Divine grace and mercy .when one is neglectful of attaining those means which secure His grace and mercy

cries in his 'Arafah Supplication (ع) It is in allusion to this point that Imam Husayn b. 'Ali saying, "May the eye of he who does not

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١ - : Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ۶٢: ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِئِينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

behold You watching over him be blind. And he to whom You have not apportioned (some love will lose his asset of existence."(۱)

It is in the hereafter that we will reap the fruit of fear and love. There will be the abode of chastisement for those who did not respect this blessing or who lost hope in redemption, drowning in the whirlpool of sin, or whom were deceived and thus failed to prepare provisions for their eternal life. There will be the abode of blessing and peace, free of all forms of anxiety and fear for those who succeeded in keeping the balance of fear and hope, those who refrained from sin and prepared sufficient .provisions of good deeds for their eternal life

For further reading on this topic refer to books of ethics, the chapters on fear and :hope, love, and friendship. The following are a few suggestions

Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, The Levels of Ethics in the Qur`an .۱

Imam Khomeini, An Exposition of Forty Hadith .۲

Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi, Ethics in the Qur`an .۳

Question ۹: Asking one's need from other than Allah

point

Question: Is it not polytheistic to ask for one's needs from anyone other than Allah since it is Allah (awj) who is (ع) or the infallible Imams (ص) (awj) such as the Prophet ?the Fulfiller of Needs

Brief Answer

If one reveres, refers or takes recourse to, or seeks one's needs from these personages with the intention that are separate from Allah (awj) and independent of Him in fulfilling our needs, such an intention and notion is polytheistic

١- Mafatih al-Jinan, Imam Husayn's (ع) supplication on the day of ‘Arafah: عَمِيَتْ عَيْنٌ لاَ تَرَاكَ عَلَيْهَا رَقِيبًا، وَخَسِرَتْ صَفْقَةُ عَبْدٍ لَمْ تَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ حُبِّكَ نَصِيباً...

and contrary to tawhid af'ali (the Unity of actions—the independence of Allah (awj) from all else, and the dependence of all other beings on Him in their actions) and tawhid rububi (the Unity of Lordship—His being the sole Planner and sovereign Lord, with all others, whether angels, prophets, or the natural worlds, being Divine workers). Such an intention constitutes polytheism in one's understanding of Divine .actions or Lordship

:But if this same respect, reference, and recourse are with the intention of

;a. Obedience to a Divine command

b. Repaying the debt we owe them by virtue of their being the conduit of Divine grace ;in the creational and legal realms

c. Follow their example or benefit from their special attention, without viewing them ;(as independent of Allah (awj

then there is no contradiction with Unity of actions or Lordship or with the fact that Allah (awj) is the sole (independent) Fulfiller of needs, since the actions, planning, and fulfilment of people's desires through these personages are subordinate to Allah's (awj) action, Lordship, and His being the Fulfiller of needs. They are not independent .of Him for it to be considered polytheism

Thus, the criterion of polytheism in seeking one's needs from someone other than Allah (awj) is the intention of the individual. If he maintains the Divinity or Lordship of whoever he takes recourse to, or views them as being free of need of Allah (awj), such recourse is considered polytheism because of that belief. But if it is in order to obey Allah (awj) and

benefit from the honour and esteem those esteemed people enjoy before Him, so that they implore Allah (awj) for that person's needs or fulfil them with Allah's (awj) permission, such an action is not only not polytheistic, but the person taking recourse .is also worthy of a reward for having acted in accordance with a Divine command

Detailed Answer

The human being's existence has two aspects, meaning that he is a combination of a celestial soul and a material body. His entire being consists of poverty and need [towards Allah (awj)]. Since he has two aspects, he must fulfil the needs of both aspects in a balanced manner free of the two extremes of excess or negligence in order to remain sound and preserve his existence, and in order to follow the path of .(advancement and attain the peak of true salvation (the station of Divine regency

The Creator of the Universe, who in His infinite Wisdom had a specific purpose in the creation of humanity and is aware of the needs of all its existential dimensions, prepared the groundwork for the fulfilment of humanity's various needs either before .their creation or simultaneous to it

Divine Will dictates that the human being ensures his physical and spiritual soundness and salvation naturally and through free will; otherwise, He could have created mankind in a perfect bodily form, so that he would have no need of development to .perfection, just as the creation of the sky and the Earth is in that way

And He could

likewise have created him in a perfect spiritual form, so that he would have no deficiencies in terms of worship, obedience, and entering the sacred realm, just as He created the angels. But the distinction of humanity over all other beings lies in .becoming superior to angels while possessing the physical and spiritual needs

To attain one's needs, the human being, possessed of free will, must make the best use of the abundant array of Divine blessings in the heavens and the Earth in order to be sound and remain alive. In order to attain one's spiritual needs, one must make use of the Divine laws in order to connect one's celestial soul with the malakut .((celestial realm

There is no denying the role of creational and material factors in fulfilling the physical needs of the human being or in the fact that he makes constant use of these factors. Since humanity is familiar with these factors from the moment of birth, or rather ever since humanity was created, the objection does not arise in the mind of most believers that benefiting from these means and effects in fulfilling one's physical .needs may be polytheism or improper conduct in Allah's (awj) dominion

For the fulfilment of humanity's spiritual needs, Allah (awj), the Wise, has placed another form of sustenance at people's disposal in the form of laws and religion, with sound nourishment in terms of belief, worship, morals, and training, conveyed by the This is why they are called the "vessel .(ع) prophets

of legislative grace." This is while the divine prophets, too, are required to observe those limits and duties and to utilize them to meet their spiritual needs and become linked to the spiritual and celestial realm, which is beyond their senses and perception, and for at least some moments of every day they must connect to the .(sacred realm (through the daily acts of worship

There are some people who, in availing themselves of this Divine legislative blessing, have excelled others and have linked themselves to that realm both quicker and more strongly than them, so that it is as if they have detached themselves from the natural world and have themselves become celestial. Even amongst these people there are some who have surpassed the rest and attained the station of Divine regent (khalifah), becoming the "'ummal Allah" (workers of Allah). And in this way, they also become vessels of creational grace; that is, they become intermediaries between that realm and people who have fallen behind the caravan. Thus, these individuals who have fallen behind have no choice but to make use of these intermediaries to .benefit from the spiritual realm and meet their needs

This is where the misconception arises that taking recourse to or seeking one's needs .from these personages contradicts Unity of action or Unity of Lordship

But just as utilizing material resources and fulfilling physical needs is not polytheism, since Allah (awj) Himself created these blessings, subjected them to mankind(١) and gave him permission (in the manner of

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١- Surat al-Jathiyah (٤٥), Verses ١٢-١٣: اَللَّهُ الَّذِی سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِیَ الْفُلْكُ فِیهِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ. وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَا فِی السَّمٰوَاتِ وَمَا فِی الأَرْضِ جَمِیعًا مِنْهُ إِنَّ فِی ذٰلِكَ لآیَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ یَتَفَكَّرُونَ

his creation) to use them in the correct way (which is explained by religious law)—and anyone who is a monotheist knows that they are His gifts, created by Him, and dependent on Him and does not consider them independent or necessary existents—in the same way, taking recourse to, respecting, and seeking one's needs from those personages, too, presents no contradiction to the Unity of Action or Unity of Lordship and to the fact that only Allah (awj) is the (independent) Fulfiller of needs, since in this recourse or attention to these personages, they are not viewed as being parallel to or .(independent of Allah (awj

Rather, those possessed with awareness view their efficacy and planning as being an extension of Allah's (awj) planning and action, and consider their existence—like that of all other beings—to be nothing but their very needfulness of the Divine Essence, since without Divine providence and grace they have no being of their own, let alone for them to be able to perform actions or fulfil needs. Thus, the belief in their efficacy and their fulfilment of needs, since it is in extension of Allah's (awj) action and being .the Fulfiller of needs, does not entail polytheism

As for why Allah (awj) referred us to these noble people and why we are in need of :them to benefit from the spiritual and celestial realm, this is for several reasons

١. These individuals are the "vessels of Divine grace" to people and a channel or conduit for the current of

Divine mercy towards all beings of the universe, to the extent that if not for these Noble beings, the creation of the heavens and Earth and what is between them would not have been worthy of note. This is why Allah (awj) says in the well-known hadith qudsi [hadith in which both the words and the meaning belong to Allah (awj), as opposed to the prophet explaining the meaning in his own words]: “If not for you (the Prophet (ص)), I would not have created the universe, and if not for ‘Ali I would not have created you, and if not for Fatimah I would not have created the two of you [since the existence of the three of you, who complement each other, is the reason for (creation].”(۱)

Thus, to attain the source of the grace of being, one must make use of this channel so as not to be deprived of Divine providence. This is why we say in Du’a al-Nudbah: ”?“Where is that Godly threshold through which they enter

Since these intimate personages in Allah’s (awj) court have adorned themselves .۲ with Divine attributes, attention to them is like attention to Allah (awj), since intimacy with them—even if in times of need—makes one attentive to Allah (awj) and reminds one of the Divine signs. This is why we recite in one of the supplications, “Where is ”?that Godly countenance to which the friends of Allah turn

Since they are intimate in Allah’s (awj) court and vessels of grace, their .۳

p: ۷۲

۱- Majma’ al-Nurayn, pg. ۱۴: لَوْلَاکَ لَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْأَفْلَاکَ، وَ لَوْ لَا عَلِیٌّ لَمَا خَلَقْتُکَ، وَ لَوْ لَا فَاطِمَةُ لَمَا خَلَقْتُکُمَا.

prayers do not go unanswered and their intercession is accepted by Allah (awj). Thus, in the continuation of our supplication (an-Nudbah) we say, "Where is that distressed one whose prayers are always answered?" Also, since they are noble, they do not refuse the request of any supplicant. If it is in his best interest, they do not send him back empty-handed, and this has been experienced many times by their contemporaries and visitors to their shrines. This is why they are addressed with the words, "Your habit is kindness and your disposition is nobility. Your affair is truth, (sincerity, and compassion."(١)

A direct link with the unseen realm is not possible for people who have not attained .۴ the level of perfection, and thus they must make use of these means and paths. This ,is why Allah (awj) has commanded

(O you who believe. Fear Allah and seek a means (of approach) to Him."(٢)"

are called the "means" and (ع) There are also many traditions in which the Ahlul Bayt Divine "strong faith" that a believer must recognize and take hold of.(٣) Again, we recite in Du'a an-Nudbah, "Where is the one who is a means of connection between "?the earth and heavens

To know, refer, and take recourse to them produces familiarity with them and the .۵ fulfilment of needs and thus brings about love and intimacy. This love and intimacy with these noble personages becomes a source of instruction and guidance for the individual, although they themselves are free

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١- Mafatih al-Jinan - Ziyarat Jami'ah: عَادَتُكُمُ الإِحْسَانُ وَ سَجِيَّتُكُمُ الْكَرَمُ وَ شَأْنُكُمُ الْحَقُّ وَ الصِّدْقُ وَ الرِّفْقُ...

٢- Surat al-Ma`idah (۵), Verse ٣۵: ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

٣- Some of these traditions can be found in al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur`an, vol. ۵ pg. ٣٣٣.

of need of people and their referral, since they have attained their goal through Divine .attention

The referral of people to the friends (awliya') of Allah (awj) is a reward that they .۶ :(ص) receive in return for their efforts, as Allah (awj) says to the Prophet

And remain awake for a portion of the night, (involved in) supplication; perhaps you" (will attain a praiseworthy station (that of intercession in this world and the next)."(۱

People's referring and taking recourse to these noble personages on the one hand .۷ encourages others to follow their path, and on the other hand it does away with the arrogance and pride of worshippers, ascetics, "wayfarers," and other claimants to a "journey to Allah" and to self-purification, and it prevents ostentatious and .pretentious impostors from flourishing

The station of the perfect human being is many degrees higher than that of the .۸ :angels, since

In this world and the next, the angels are at the service of Allah's (awj) righteous .۱ ;servants

The efficacy of the angels is predetermined and is therefore not considered a .۲ ;distinction for them

advanced farther than the (ص) On the night of the Ascension (mi'raj), the Prophet .۳ ;(ع) angel Jibra`il

When the angels are entrusted with executing various affairs(۲) (in extension of Allah's (awj) efficacy), why should not these personages, who have attained the ?greatest station of purity and nearness to Allah (awj), be the same

The conduct of great personalities and wise people, when they see their subordinates are able to perform certain

۱- ﴿ :۷۹ Surat al-Isra' (۱۷), Verse وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَكَ عَسَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُودًا﴾

۲- ﴿ :۵ Surat al-Nazi'at (۷۹), Verse فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْراً ﴾

tasks, is to entrust those tasks to them so they can supervise those subordinates in responding to those who refer to them. In this way, those individuals can receive an exclusive training and be given a recompense for their efforts, and in addition others can get to know them and their station better and will find it easier to become familiar .and intimate with them

Also, it is the conduct of rational people when they want to contact some prominent personality to do so through intermediaries and people close to him if they themselves are not close to him, making use of the respect and honour in which those people are held to attain their needs. Of course, they do this with the full realization that this need to use intermediaries is because of their own inadequacy; the intermediaries are in no way equal or parallel to that prominent person, and they .cannot do anything without his consent

In short, to become connected to the unseen world, obey Divine commands, train and elevate the self, and fulfil our needs in this world and the next—both spiritual and physical—we are in need of recognizing, referring to, imploring, and loving the friends (awliya') of Allah (awj). Taking recourse to them is to take recourse to (Divinely sanctioned) means, "the firm rope of Allah" and the intermediaries in Allah's (awj) court — intermediaries who are dependent on Allah (awj) for their existence and all their existential attributes, and whose efficacy and fulfilment of people's needs

.(is in extension of that of Allah (awj

Taking recourse in this manner is not polytheism, since the independent Fulfiller of .needs is none but Allah (awj) alone

Question ۱۰: The Light of Heavens and the Earth

point

Question: What is the meaning of Allah (awj) being the light of the heavens and of the ?earth? Is He light in the physical sense? If not, what is intended

Brief Answer

Without doubt, the "light" mentioned in the verse of Light (Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth…) is not a physical and sensible light. For, sensible light pertains to the accidental characteristics and qualities of material existents. Hence, the arguments that negate Allah's (awj) corporeality preclude perceiving Allah (awj) as sensible and material light. Moreover, there are numerous Qur`anic verses that deny the possibility of a visual perception of Allah (awj), disaffirming any similarity .between Him and His creatures

Therefore, when Allah (awj) is referred to as "the light of the heavens and the earth" .certainly sensible light is not meant

Light by definition is that which is essentially manifest and makes other things manifest and visible as well; it is clear and it makes [other things] clear; it is apparent and it makes [other things] apparent. This definition applies both to sensory light—such as the light of the sun, the stars and of a lamp—and to super-sensory light—such as knowledge and faith. Of course, what comes to mind on hearing the word light initially is sensory light. But by analyzing the definition of light (i.e. what is essentially

manifest and makes other things manifest), one finds it permissible to apply the word to spiritual matters, for they illuminate the spirit, the inward, and such application is also encountered in the Qur`an where it refers to faith as a light bestowed on the believer. In addition, gnostics employ the word to signify "love".

As the Divine Essence is bright and manifest and is also the cause that brightens and makes other things manifest—for, He is the creator and existence-granter — employing the word light to denote Allah (awj) is correct. Rather, as the cause for a thing's appearance to others is its existence, it must be concluded that the most fundamental instance of light is existence itself. Hence, Allah (awj), is the most perfect instance of light. He is the sole real essentially manifest being who makes other things manifest. Thus, it must be proclaimed that He is the light who illuminates the heavens and the earth.

Furthermore, it must be noted that "the heavens and the earth" is an allusion to the entirety of the world of being, to all the celestial and terrestrial creatures, to the hidden and apparent worlds, not merely the sky above us or the Earth we inhabit. Hence, the meaning of, "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth," is that Allah (awj) is the light of the whole universe.

The reason why the word light is employed in lieu of creator is to point to the fact that just as light is

manifest and as such does not need anything else to shed light on it, Allah (awj) is also manifest and obvious and there is no need for a mediating agent to illuminate Allah (awj). Hence, gnostics following the teachings of the prophets and Imams (ع), have expressed that all creatures must be understood in the light of Allah (awj); we should not try to identify Allah (awj) through His creatures and effects [taken on their own level]. For the friends of Allah (awj), everything is manifest in the light of Allah (awj), and other than His light, nothing is to be seen. If not for the Divine light, everything would sink into the darkness of non-existence.

Therefore, the main point that is understood from this verse is that Allah (awj) is known to all His creatures, for the appearance of all things derives from His manifestness and illumination. Allah (awj) is not absent so as to be revealed through His creatures. He is manifest in all His Essence, and so His obscurity in the eyes of the intellectually impaired is due to the intensity of His light; "O You Who are obscured by the intensity of Your light, You Who are manifest but hidden in Your manifestness."

Another point that is derived from this verse is the fact that Allah (awj) [in Islam] is referred to as "Light" not "the Greatest Light." The Manichaean belief that Allah (awj) is the "Greatest Light" (i.e. a physical light similar to other lights

but greater and more elevated) is not a correct belief. According to the Qur`an, Allah (awj) is "pure light" and is super-sensory. He is the sole light of the world of existence, and all else is "darkness." In the words of some supplications, He is "the Light of Lights." That is, He is the real light, and if there is any light at all, it is thanks to His .existence and light

Regarding the exposition, the reality underlying this verse, and its application there are numerous views and narrations that can be sought by referring to books of .exegesis and the corpus of narrations

Detailed Answer

,Without doubt, by referring to Allah (awj) as light

(Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth,"(١"

the Qur`an does not intend to identify Him as a physical light. The sensible light is a creature among the creatures of Allah (awj), as is expressly stated in the first verse of ,Surat al-An'am

All praise belongs to Allah who created the heavens and the earth and made the" (darkness and the light."(٢

Muslim philosophers, theologians, and Qur`anic exegetes have all provided strong proofs in negating a corporeal aspect for Allah (awj).(٣) Hence, using the word light in reference to Allah (awj) does not denote sensory light, which is either a physical .substance or a characteristic of matter

Among the exegete-theologians, Fakhr Razi has probably treated this topic more thoroughly than any other. In his exposition of the Verse of Light, he has formulated six rational

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١- ﴿ :Surat Nur (٢٤), Verse ٣٥ اَللّٰهُ نُورُ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَ الأَرْضِ﴾

٢- ﴿وَ جَعَلَ الظُّلُمٰتِ وَ النُّورَ﴾ Surat al-An'am (٦), Verse ١:

٣- These proofs can be found in Kashf al-Murad fi Sharh Tajrid al-I'tiqad pg. ٢٨٧ and Nihayat al-Hikmah, pg. ٢٧٥.

arguments why Allah (awj) cannot have a body and so consequently the light (mentioned in the verse cannot be signifying sensible and material light.(١)

More importantly, there are numerous verses in the Qur`an that negate the coming-.(into-being (huduth) and corporeality of Allah (awj

Moreover, the verse, "There is nothing like Him," that recurs several times in the Qur`an denies the possibility of any likeness and resemblance of Allah (awj) to other existents. Hence, Allah's (awj) being light cannot be of the nature of the sensible light, for the latter has many instances [while Allah (awj) in no way resembles physical .[phenomena

In analyzing the meaning of the word light, 'Allamah Tabataba`i explains: "The word light carries a popular meaning, and that is, the thing that lightens dark bodies so that we can see them, and so light is the thing by which all things become apparent and visible. Of course, light itself is essentially manifest and visible; there is nothing else that lightens it. Hence, light can be defined as that which is essentially manifest and makes other things manifest as well. This is the first meaning to which the word light was initially designated. Subsequently, the word was employed, by way of allegory or secondary designation (waz' thanawi), to indicate whatever made sensible things visible. In a later stage, the word was also applied to super sensible realities. It is in this sense that intellect is defined as a light which reveals the intelligibles. All these various usages have stemmed

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al-Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. ٢٢, pg. ٢٢۴ -١

from analyzing the initial meaning of light: “that which is essentially manifest and makes other things manifest as well.”(1)

Thus, what is initially understood by light is the sensible light that emanates from illuminant objects—such as, the sun, the stars, and man-made lamps—without which the world would be shrouded in darkness. Of course, the essence and definition of light from the standpoint of the physicists is a whole different issue. They might consider the reality of light as yet unravelled and they might have disagreements regarding it, but what is for certain is that in the material world there does exist something referred to as light that is radiated from illuminate objects, technically referred to as “sources of light.” The application of the word light, however, is not limited to sensible light. It can be applied to whatever is “manifest and makes manifest” or, put differently, to whatever is “apparent and makes apparent.” For instance, we often refer to knowledge as light, for it is in its essence clear and also sheds light on other realities.(2)

Regarding the believer, the Qur`an states,

“He who was lifeless, then We gave him life and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people…”(3)

So in the Qur`anic terminology, faith is “light.” And as faith illuminates the heart of the believer, shows him the destination, and guides him to felicity, this application of light is correct. This is similar to the gnostics’ reference to love as “light.” Rumi says:

Love is victorious and

۱- al-Mizan, vol. ۱۵, pg. ۱۲۲

۲- Tafsir Surat al-Nur, by Murtada Muhahhari, pg. ۱۰۱

۳- Surat al-An’am (۶), Verse ۱۲۲: أَوَمَنْ كَانَ مَيْتاً فَأَحْـيَيْنَهُ وَ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُوراً يَمْشِى بِهِ فِى النَّاسِ...

;I, conquered

(As the moon, I am illuminated with the light of Love.(۱

Using the word light in reference to Allah (awj) is correct, for such usage has occurred in the Qur`an and the narrations.(۲) But we must be careful to note in saying "Allah is light" that we do not intend material and sensible light; rather, that the Divine Essence is manifest and manifestant(۳). The manifestness and clearness of everything is due to the emanation of His Essence. However, nothing illuminates Him. Thus, we can .correctly say, Allah is light

Allamah Tabataba`i writes: "Since it is the existence of everything that is the cause of' its manifestness to others, therefore the highest form of light is existence itself. Moreover, since the existence of contingent beings depends on the bestowal of existence by the Truth, the Supreme, He is the most complete instance of light. It is He Who is essentially manifest and also makes manifest all-other-than-him. All other existents become manifest and existent by virtue of Him. And this is the meaning of (the verse, 'Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth.'"(۴

From the aforesaid explanations the meaning of the Verse of Light becomes clear that: Allah (awj) is the creator and the illuminator of the heavens and the earth. By the expression "the heavens and the earth" what is intended is the entirety of the world of existence; all the celestial and the terrestrial existents; the apparent and the hidden worlds.(۵) "The heavens and the earth" does not

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Mathnawi, Sixth Notebook -۱

Nur (Light) is one of Allah's (awj) names. Other than the Noble Qur`an, Allah (awj) -۲ has been addressed by this name in a number of traditions. Some examples are Kitab al-Tawhid ch. ۲۹, pg. ۱۹۴, no. ۸ and pg. ۱۹۵, no. ۹ and pg. ۲۱۹, no. ۱۱; al-Khisal. In a number of supplications such as Du'a` al-Kumail and Du'a` Jawshan Kabir this name of Allah (awj) has been mentioned. It is considered one of Allah's (awj) ۹۹ names. Gnostics have prolonged discussions about these names which we cannot discuss

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I did not find this word in the dictionary in the sense intended here. However, I think -٣ (.it is appropriate to use it since the suffix –ant denotes fa'iliyyah. (Tr

al-Mizan, vol. ١٥, pg. ١٢٢ -۴

Tafsir Surat Nur, by Murtada Muhahhari, pg. ٩٨ -۵

merely signify the sky above and the Earth that we inhabit. Therefore, the meaning of the verse is that Allah (awj) is the light of the entire universe. The reason why the verse has employed this word in lieu of creator is to point to the fact that just as light is itself visible and does not need anything else to make it visible, rather it is light itself that illuminates all other things, Allah (awj), likewise has no creator and there is no other agent that could shed light on Him. He is a manifest, clear, and self-evident existent. There is no need for formulating reasoning to prove His existence. He is the creator of all the other existents of the world of being. In the words of Haji Sabzwari, "O You Who are obscured by the intensity of Your light."(۱)

Thus, as propounded by the gnostics in following the mystical teachings of the prophets and the Imams (ع), Allah (awj) is manifest to the highest degree; He is absolutely clear, and hence there is no need for the mediation of His creatures to reveal Him. In other words, in order to reason for the existence of Allah (awj), one should utilize the argument from cause rather than the argument from effect. We must first comprehend Allah (awj) and then through Him His creatures, not conversely.

It is to this truth that the following line from the 'Arafah Supplication (related from Imam al-Husayn b. 'Ali (ع)) refers: "O Allah!

۱- Manzumah, Chapter Hikmah

".Being distracted by [Your] effects and creatures prevents me from seeing You

expresses, (ع) In Du'a Kumayl, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib "By the light of Your face from which all things are alight." If not for the light of the Divine Visage and Essence, everything would be dark. That is, nothing will exist, and .all things would recede back into the darkness of non-existence

Without the light of the Divine Essence the shadow of non-existence would envelope all things; the resulting darkness would not be like that of the night [rather it would be .[the darkness of non-existence

Hence, it must be said that Allah (awj), is absolute light. In comparison to Him, there is no other light. All other lights in comparison to Him are darkness. For, the only existent Who is by His essence manifest and manifesting is Allah (awj). All other things that are manifest and that illuminate other creatures are by their essences dark. It is Allah .(awj) Who has bestowed on them that feature

It is in this light that 'Allamah Tabataba`i has made the following inference from that verse: "Hence, it can be inferred that Allah (awj), is not obscure for any existent, for the disclosure of all things, to themselves and to other things, derives from Allah's (awj) illuminating. If Allah (awj) had not illuminated or brought into existence anything, nothing would have existed. Thus prior to all other things, Allah (awj) is the essential ... manifest being

Hence it can be concluded that light in the verse, 'Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth,' refers to that all-embracing Divine light which is the source of the universe, the light to which all things owe their manifestness, the light which is identical with the existence of everything. This is that all-embracing Divine mercy."(1)

Thus, according to the Qur`an, Allah (awj), the Supreme, is not an absent or essentially obscure God that is revealed by His creatures. Such conception is defected and elementary. Real knowledge is to comprehend the world through Allah (awj), not conversely. And this verse asserts that Allah (awj) is at the height of conspicuousness, clarity, and obviousness.

Another point that can be inferred from this verse is that we refer to Allah as light, not as "the greatest light", which implies that there are other lights as well, some more bright and others less bright, and that Allah (awj)is the greatest. According to the Qur`an, there is only one light and that is Allah, and everything else is dark and non-existent. It is true, however, that in comparing the creatures together, some are light and some are not—for instance, knowledge, faith, intellect, etc., are light. But the latter have derived their light from Allah (awj).

Thus, in comparison to Allah (awj), there is no other light, or in other words, He is "the Light of Lights."(2) That is, He is the light of all lights rather than being the greatest light. Therefore, the

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۱- al-Mizan, vol. ۱۵, pg. ۱۲۳

۲- In Mafatih al-Jinan there is a supplication called "Nur" (light). In it we read: "یا نور النور" (O light of light)

belief that Allah (awj) is the greatest light, that He is of the sensory lights but the .brightest and the most intense—reputedly attributed to the Manicheans—is false

reply to ‘Abbas (ع) In the end, we find it suitable to relate Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida’s ibn Hilal who had asked the Imam regarding the meaning of the Verse of Light: “He is (the guide for the inhabitants of the heaven and the inhabitants of the earth.”(١)

Question ١١: Divine Tests

point

?Question: If Allah (awj) is omniscient, why does He need to test mankind

Brief Answer

As implied by the question, because Allah (awj) is omniscient, the purpose of His tests is not to unveil something hitherto unknown. Rather, the Qur`an and ahadith suggest that these tests serve two purposes. First, they comprise a Divine precedent (sunnah ilahiyyah(٢)) that is in turn based on another Divine precedent that can be termed ”.“universal guidance

In particular, Allah (awj) wishes that mankind, by obeying the divine law (shari’ah) and struggling through the various circumstances that he encounters in life, will blossom from potentiality to actuality, and will thereby attain the level of perfection that has been intended for him. One of the terms that is used for such tests in Islamic literature .(”is fitnah (in this sense this term denotes a “crucible

Fitnah literally refers to the process of smelting by which gold is purified. In one hadith it is said that people are tested the way gold is tested. The mettle of man is gold ore that is

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١- al-Tawhid, ch. ١۴, no. ١

٢- A Divine precedent is a Divine action that is not bound to any specific time, place or people. Rather it is a sort of law the Allah (awj) has issued for Himself in such a way

that from the beginning of time into eternity, He always acts according to this law. For example, one of the Divine precedents can be stated like this: "If a people rejects Divine guidance and kills Allah's (awj) prophets and it becomes apparent that there is no hope that even one person from among them will submit himself to Allah (awj), ".they must be destroyed

purified in the crucible of Divine tests and guidance. It should be kept in mind though, that in the course of such tests, just as good qualities reach their perfection in the believers, bad qualities also develop to the utmost in disbelievers.

The second purpose that these tests serve is to awaken man from his sleep of heedlessness. The Qur`an explains that one of the purposes of tragedy and disaster is to test man and thereby jar him from his stupor of heedlessness. In a way, tragedy in man's life serves the same purpose as the ridges that are embossed on some modern motorways and highways that are meant to wake drivers during the monotony of highway driving so they do not fall asleep at the wheel.

There are, in reality, two types of Divine will at play here. One is called the existential will (al-iradah al-takwiniyyah) and the other is called the legislative will (al-iradah al-tashri'iyyah). Allah's (awj) existential will is that through Divine tests, both believers and disbelievers be able to actualize their good and bad potentials. On the other hand, his legislative will is that only good potentials be actualized.

Detailed Answer

Divine tests are not designed to unveil something hitherto unknown, since Allah (awj) is omniscient and needs no such unveiling. Rather, they comprise a Divine precedent, that is based on a second Divine precedent called "universal guidance." By universal guidance, we mean Allah's (awj) guidance of all creation (whether they be conscious or not), as it relates to man.

To clarify,

:we must first describe the three types of Divine guidance

١. One type of guidance is intended only for the most pious people and has been negated from other groups in the following verses of the Qur`an:

"Allah does not guide the wrongdoing ones,"

and

"Allah does not guide the corrupt ones."

The converse of this kind of guidance is misguidance.

٢. Another type of guidance known as "legislative guidance" entails showing someone the path. This kind of guidance addresses both believers and disbelievers, but does not benefit inanimate beings. Examples of this kind of guidance are in the following verses: "We showed him the path while he is either grateful or ungrateful(١)," and "As for (the people of) Thamud, we guided them, but they preferred blindness to guidance."(٢)

٣. The third kind of guidance is universal both in terms of the beings who are guided and the resulting guidance and is also called existential guidance. This is the guidance referred to in the following verse:

"Our Sustainer is He who gave everything its existence, and then guided it."(٣)

This verse implies that Allah's (awj) universal guidance includes all creation, whether conscious or inanimate. In another verse, the Qur`an states,

"who created and proportioned; who determined and guided."(٤)

Here, the verb "to determine" (taqdir) entails the facilitation of the appropriate means of a given thing so that it is "guided" to fulfil the purpose for which it was created.

All of creation – whether conscious or inanimate – attains its intended purpose through this

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۱- ﴿ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِراً وَإِمَّا كَفُوراً ﴾ Surat al-Insan (۷۶), Verse ۳:

۲- ﴿ وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمـى عَلى الْهُدى ﴾ Surat al-Fussilat (۴۱), Verse ۱۷:

۳- ﴿ قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِى أَعْطـى كُلَّ شَىْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدى ﴾ Surat Taha (۲۰), Verse ۵۰:

۴- ﴿ أَلَّذِى خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى. وَالَّذِى قَدَّرَ فَهَدى ﴾ Surat al-A'la (۸۷), Verse ۲-۳:

third type of existential guidance. However man, who is more than just a physical being living in this material world, requires more than the existential guidance afforded to all creation. He can only attain perfection by choosing his path according to his free will. For this reason, Allah must on the one hand, provide a set of positive and negative commands entailed in the shari'ah (divine law) so that man can choose to either obey or disobey.

On the other hand, Allah (awj) must create "problems" at the individual and societal levels (some of which are caused by human choice and some of which are caused by natural means such as natural disasters) so that man can choose a course of action with respect to these problems. By choosing a course of action with respect to divine law and the aforementioned problems, man actualizes the potential that is hidden within himself, and either proves himself to be worthy of eternal felicity or chastisement. It is for this reason that both the divine law and human tragedy are referred to in Islamic literature by the terms "trial," "tribulation," and "test."

To put it simply, Allah (awj) is like a scientist examining each individual human being. The parameters on which his experiments are based are the shari'ah and human tragedy. Through these two variables, a person's station with respect to the level of perfection that was intended for him is determined.(١)

To recapitulate, Divine tests are based on the Divine precedent called universal guidance.

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١ - Surat al-Kahf (١٨), Verse ٧: إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا Also refer to: Surat al-Insan (٧۶), Verse ٢, Surat al-Anbiya' (٢١), Verse ٣۵, Surat Ali-'Imran (٣), Verse ١۵۴, Surat al-Fajr (٨٩), Verse ۶, Surat al-Taghabun (۶۴), Verse ١۵, Surat Muhammad (۴٧), Verse ۴

Through these tests every person comes to know which abode he will enter: the abode of reward or the abode of chastisement. The Qur`an describes the purpose of these tests in this way: "...so that Allah may purify those who have faith and that He may eradicate the faithless."(۱)

In the course of repeated tests, the superficial faith and deceitful good qualities of the faithless and the hypocrites are extirpated. Another meaning of the "eradication of the faithless" is mentioned in the verse that says, "the (final) outcome will be in favour of the fear of Allah"(۲) and in the verse that reads,

"My righteous servants shall inherit the earth."(۳)

We can recap the positive effects of divine tests in the following two points:

۱. They serve to actualize hidden potentials. Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) says: "It is in extreme circumstances that a man's true mettle shows itself."(۴) It is narrated from Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Rida (ع) that "People are tested as gold is tested, and they are purified as gold is purified."(۵) The word fitnah refers to the process of smelting gold ore. Gold ore is melted so that its impurities float to the surface and are removed. Likewise the essence of man is like gold that Allah (awj) wishes to purify. Meanwhile, the presence of animal-like qualities such as anger and lust pose a major obstacle to his purification. It is for this reason that Divine tests are considered a means for the perfection of mankind.

In the

۱- Surat Ali-'Imran (۳), Verse ۱۴۱: وَلِـيُمَحِّصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ يَمْحَقَ الْكٰفِرِينَ

۲- Surat Taha (۲۰), Verse ۱۳۲: وَ الْعَاقِبَهُ لِلتَّقْوى

۳- Surat al-Anbiya' (۲۱), Verse ۱۰۵: وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْـنَا فِى الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِىَ الصَّالِحُونَ

۴- Nahj al-Balaghah, Short Saying ۲۱۷: فِى تَقَلُّبِ الأَحْوَالِ عِلْمُ جَوَاهِرِ الرِّجَالِ.

۵- al-Kafi, vol. ۱ pg. ۳۷۰: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا الْحَسَنِ (ع) يَقُولُ: الم أَحَـسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لاَ يُفْتَنُونَ

ثُمَّ قَالَ لِی: مَا الْفِتْنَهُ؟ قُلْتُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاکَ الَّذِی عِنْدَنَا الْفِتْنَهُ فِی الدِّینِ، فَقَالَ: یُفْتَنُونَ کَمَا یُفْتَنُ الذَّهَبُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: یُخْلَصُونَ کَمَا یُخْلَصُ الذَّهَبُ.

military, soldiers are required to perform strenuous activities to build their strength. Likewise, Divine tests are meant to strengthen man's inner self. Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) says, "Although Allah knows man better than he knows himself, (He tests him) in order to make manifest those actions by which he earns his reward or punishment."(۱)

۲. They also serve to awaken man from his sleep of heedlessness. Allah (awj) tests man both through tragedy and hardship and by showering him with an abundance of blessings such as power, health, and wealth. Often these blessing deceive a person so much that they threaten to lead to his downfall. Allah (awj) sends tragedy his way, in order to jar him from his stupor so that he can once again discern right from wrong, and so that he remembers that all existence and blessings issue from Allah (awj), whom one should never forget and against whom one should never sin.

Many verses in the Qur`an speak of this aspect of Divine tests(۲). These verses generally use the terms tadhakkur (to remind), tadarru` (to show humility), and ruju' (to return to the path). These concepts link together in the following way: to return to the path that leads to Allah (awj) one must first be reminded of Allah (awj); he must then humble himself before Allah (awj); only then can he truly return to Allah (awj) and better himself. Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) refers to this Qur`anic truth in the following way:

۱- Nahj al-Balaghah, Short Saying ۹۳: وَ إِنْ كَانَ سُبْحَانَهُ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَ لٰكِنْ لِتَظْهَرَ الأَفْعَالُ الَّتِی بِهَا يُسْتَحَقُّ الثَّوَابُ وَالْعِقَابُ.

۲- Surat al-A'raf (۷), Verse ۹۴, Surat al-Rum (۳۰), Verse ۴۱, Surat al-Sajdah (۳۲), Verse ۲۱, Surat al-A'raf (۷), Verses ۱۶۸-۳۰, Surat al-Tawbah (۹), Verse ۱۲۶

When Allah's servants commit a sin, He tests them with hardship until they repent"
(and cease committing sins and heed Allah's admonishment."(1)

If what we have said so far is true, then one might wonder why Allah's (awj) prophets and saints are tested? The answer to this question is found in a ,(ع) Imams ,(ع) where he says: "The divine test is a form of (ع) narration of Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib discipline for the wrongdoer, a test for the believer, a means to increase one's station
(for the prophets, and a means of ennoblement for the saints of Allah."(2)

Question 12: Allah's Will in Human Guidance

point

Question: Considering the verse of the Qur`an in Surah 32, verse 13 which reads, "Had We wished We would have given every soul its guidance," - can it not be concluded that Allah (awj) has not desired the guidance of all humanity? If Allah (awj) had desired the guidance of all humanity He would have willed such, but obviously He has ?not. Why

Brief Answer

Allah (awj) has willed the guidance of all His creatures. For, after taking all the :[relevant] Qur`anic verses into consideration, the following points can be deduced

Divine guidance is divided into existential (takwini) and legislative (tashri'i) guidance. .1 Existential guidance is the all-encompassing guidance that embraces the entire creation. Allah (awj) has put all creatures in motion by ingraining in their nature their .inclination for seeking perfection and reaching their ultimate goal

The legislative guidance, which is more specific, is exclusive to the bearers of intellect and

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1- Nahj al- Balaghah, Sermon 143: إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْتَلِي عِبَادَهُ عِنْدَ الأَعْمَالِ السَّيِّئَهِ بِنَقْصِ الثَّمَرَاتِ... لِيَتُوبَ تَائِبٌ وَيَقْلَعَ مُقْلِعٌ وَيَتَذَكَّرَ مُتَذَكِّرٌ.

٢- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٤, pg. ٢٣٥, no. ٥٤: إِنَّ الْبَلَاءَ لِلظَّالِمِ أَدَبٌ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِ اِمْتِحَانٌ وَلِلَانْبِيَاءِ دَرَجَهٌ وَلِلأَوْلِيَاءِ كَرَامَهٌ.

thought and pertains to religious issues, such as rightful doctrines and the Divine oughts and ought-nots. The prophets and their infallible successors serve as the conduit for this latter guidance. It is this guidance that is an extra favour bestowed .upon mankind, and hence they enjoy both types of guidance

There are many verses in the Qur`an which confirm the free will of the human .۲ being, such as, "Indeed We have guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful." This ability to choose is a measure of existential guidance from Allah (awj), for the human being cannot himself be the source of his free will as it would entail the .problem of circularity or infinite regress

The entire creation is founded on a framework of causality, and the Divine norm .۳ (sunnat Allah) requires that all affairs be guided through the causal matrix. In this vein, He has provided the means of guidance for all human beings, by which they can attain the ultimate goal of their existence. So although the human being has been blessed by existential guidance, at the same time he is a free being and can choose to take the path of Divine guidance—thereby preparing in himself the grounds for further guidance—or he could choose to take the opposite direction, which leads to .disbelief and oppression

What the verse in question intends is that if Allah (awj) had wished, He could have (created the human being without free will. But Allah (awj

chose to mould the human being as a volitional creature by the means of His existential and legislative guidance so that he would be responsible for his actions and distinguish truth from falsehood. It is in line with the same Divine norm that if the human being embarks on the path of oppression and disbelief, consequently he would be deprived of Divine guidance. But on the other hand, by choosing to follow the path .of truth, the human being earns the blessing of further guidance

Detailed Answer

.Before answering the question, it is necessary to mention some preparatory points

١. It would be helpful to reflect on the entire verse in question: "Had We wished We would have given every soul its guidance, but My word became due [against the :[defiant

'(Surely I will fill hell with all the [guilty] jinn and humans.'"(١)

٢. The definition of hidayah: It signifies enlightening and showing the way, out of .kindness and goodwill

٣. The Qur`aan recognizes two general types of Divine guidance: existential (takwini) and legislative (tashri'i). The existential is that all-inclusive guidance that benefits the entire creation. Allah (awj) guides all creatures to their ultimate perfection and goal by means of that which He has imparted in their nature. In this regard the Qur`an explains, "He said

'.(Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it"(٢)

:This point is reiterated in the following verse

"[(He] who created and proportioned, [He] who determined and guided."(٣)

The legislative guidance, which is the one

١ - ﴿ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لآتَيْنَا كُـــلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدَاهَا وَلَٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّى لَأملأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴾ :Surat al-Sajdah (٣٢), Verse ١٣

٢- ﴿ قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِى أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَىْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى ﴾ :Surat Taha (٢٠), Verse ٥٠

٣- ﴿ الَّذِى خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى. وَالَّذِى قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى ﴾ :Surat al-A'la (٨٧), Verses ٢-٣

specific to the bearers of intellect and thought, pertains to religious matters such as the true doctrines and the Divine law. This guidance has been delivered to humankind through the channels of Divine prophets and their infallible successors. Allah (awj) ,says

A part [of mankind] He has guided and a part has deserved [to be consigned to]" ;(error"(۱

,also

(and Allah guides whomever He wishes to a straight path."(۲"

As these verses allude to a limited guidance, it can be inferred that the guidance in question is the legislative. Nevertheless, this guidance in the context of the human .[community is an all-inclusive one [meant for all human beings

The human being, as a creation of Allah (awj) who is subservient to Him, is the only .۴ creature moulded a free being. There are numerous verses in the Qur`an that :emphasize the volitional nature of the human being, such as

And say, '[This is] the truth from your Lord: let anyone who wishes believe it, and let" (anyone who wishes disbelieve it."(۳

:In addition

(Indeed We have guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful."(۴"

.Hence it is the individual himself who is responsible for what he does

This freewill is part and parcel of human existence and is by no means separable from it. Thus the human being is predestined in possessing freewill. There is no human being who could decide not to be free. From this it can be deduced that the source of human volition cannot be

١- ﴿ فَرِيقًا هَدَى وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ... ﴾ Surat al-A'raf (٧), Verse ٣٠:

٢- ﴿ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَآءُ إِلى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيم... ﴾ Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ٢١٣:

٣- ﴿ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَ مَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ... ﴾ Surat al-Kahf (١٨), Verse ٢٩:

٤- ﴿ إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴾ Surat al-Insan (٧۶), Verse ٣:

the human being himself, for then we would have the problem of circularity or infinite regress. But in the context of his deeds and actions, he is free by nature, and this is .one instance of that existential guidance

The existential system is founded on the system of causality. The Divine norm . ۵ (sunnat Allah) has established that all events come about by means of their natural causes. The same norm applies to the question of guidance in which case He provides the means of guidance so that truth would be clear for those who seek it and so that .they could attain the ultimate goal by recognizing those means

Based on the aforementioned points and according to the explicit connotations of various verses of the Qur`an, the existential guidance encompasses all creatures. In addition, the human being has been blessed by the Divine legislative guidance as well. Due to the fact that freewill has been existentially inscribed in his nature, he has the option of following the exclusive Divine guidance, thereby preparing the grounds for further elevation. But he could also choose to abandon the way of truth, plunging into disbelief and darkness. The verse in question indicates that had Allah (awj) wished, He could have created the human being without freewill. But He chose to favour humankind by both the existential and the legislative guidance, by which He could hold the human being accountable for his actions, and by which He intended to .distinguish truth from falsehood

Conclusion

It has been

clarified that understanding the verse in question to mean that God does not wish the guidance of all human beings is a misconception. Rather, the contrary holds true. For He has wished the guidance not only of all human beings but of all creatures. The difference lies in that Allah (awj) has ordained by His Divine norm that if the human being decided to walk on to the path of disbelief and oppression, he would be naturally deprived of Divine guidance. But if he chose to traverse the path of truth, he .would be blessed by that Divine guidance

As for those who strive in Us, We shall surely guide them in Our ways, and Allah is" (indeed with the virtuous."(۱)

Question ۱۳: Non-muslims and Hell

point

Question: We know of many people around the world who are not Muslims or Shi`a but are nevertheless individuals of good conduct; for example, non-Muslims are responsible for many inventions. Is it right that they all deserve to be punished in Hell ?because they are not Muslims

Brief Answer

:Those who do not believe in Islam can be classified into two groups

۱. Those who are termed 'Jahil-e-Muqassir' (lit. 'culpable ignorant'). These are non-believers to whom the message of Islam has reached and who have understood its truthfulness. However, they are not prepared to accept the truth due to their .obstinacy and stubbornness. This group deserves to be punished in Hell

۲. Those who are termed 'Jahil-e-Qasir' (lit. 'inculpable ignorant'). These are non-believers to whom the message of Islam has not reached, or

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۱- Surat al-'Ankabut (۲۹), Verse ۶۹: وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

it has been presented to them in a very incomplete and untruthful manner. Such people will attain salvation if they are truthful to their own religion.

Detailed Answer

Islam is a simple and accessible religion and it is easy to find out its truthfulness by means of the two guiding authorities that have been given to mankind: the 'outer' guiding authority, that is, Allah's prophets and saints, and the 'inner' one, that is, the intellect.(١)

Islam is in complete opposition to the concept of religious pluralism because this concept is based on the principle that different beliefs are equal and that Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Jews etc. all have the same rank and status. According to religious pluralism, no proof exists for the invalidity of any belief because the truth is unattainable and religion is a relative and completely personal affair. Not only are its truths and real substance unattainable and every person takes from it whatever he or she personally understands, but furthermore, there are numerous truths and many correct paths to salvation and deliverance.

Such views are inconsistent with the religion of Islam, which is comprised of a set of fundamental beliefs and practical, legal and ethical laws and principles. Islam does however give concessions to those who are far from its reality. This can be better understood when we consider that there are two groups of people who do not believe in Islam:

١. Those who are termed 'Jahil-e-Muqassir' (lit. 'culpable ignorant') and who are obstinate non-believers. That is, Islam has reached them and

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١- al-Kafi, v.١, p.٢٥, no. ٢٢

they have understood its truthfulness; however, they are not prepared to accept the truth due to their obstinacy and stubbornness. This group of non-believers deserves to be punished in Hell because despite having known the truth, they have chosen with their own free will to reject Islam. These non-believers, even though they may be of good conduct, could have attained salvation but instead have closed the path to salvation themselves as they have covered the truth and are rebellious and obstinate .in relation to it. As a result, they have chosen their own predicament

Those who are termed 'Jahil-e-Qasir' (lit. 'inculpable ignorant'). These are non- .۲ believers to whom the message of Islam has not reached, or it has been presented to them in a very incomplete and untruthful manner; so for example, they think that Islam has the same status and rank as the religions of India and China and at the most, Judaism and Christianity. This group of non-believers, whether they live in the most remote parts of the world or in the most civilized, will not be subject to the punishments of Hell because they are not blameworthy for their lack of belief, and .punishment is only for blameworthy sinners

Unfortunately, there is so much propaganda against Islam that free thinking and seeking the truth has been taken away from many people in a way that they cannot distinguish truth from falsehood. The fact is that despite making significant material progress, contemporary man has regressed spiritually. The main cause of

this is the ‘World Arrogance’—the superpower enemies of Islam—with its propagandist and deceptive media system that in full force tries to change and distort the truth. Therefore, many people, even in the most civilized of places, have remained school of (ع) unaware of the true message of Islam and of the enlivening Ahlul Bayt thought. Worse still, incorrect and unrealistic information about Islam is given to them in a way that a religion of mercy, love and justice is portrayed as a religion of violence, .oppression and injustice

In conclusion, from the point of view of Islam, those who have not heard about the true message of Islam and are not blameworthy with regard to this will attain salvation if they are truthful to their own religion. This religion must be based on the ‘fitrah’(۱)—man’s primordial, innate nature—and so the followers of such a religion, for example, abstain from lying and committing crimes against humanity. This rule is also applicable to the Ahlus Sunnah to whom the truthfulness of Shi’aism has not been .explained correctly

Question ۱۴: Self–Confidence and Trust in Allah

point

Question: On the one hand, in the sciences of education and psychology a great deal of emphasis is placed on self-confidence, but in Islamic teachings, ethics, and gnosticism (‘irfan) on the other hand, it is stressed that one must trust only in Allah ?(awj) and not in oneself. Is their a contradiction between the two perspectives

Brief Answer

To apprehend whether there is a conflict or not, one must first have a clear definition .of the two terms

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Fitrah: Allah says in the Qur`an, “The divine nature by which Allah has created - ۱ mankind” (۳۰:۳۰). Therefore, the fitrah in every person is the root of all spiritual has said, “And it is by means of the fitrah that (ع) matters and goodness. Imam Rida

His proof is substantiated" (al-Saduq, al-Tawhid, pg. ۳۵. That is, whatever Allah has as argumentation is of no use without the fitrah. By this explanation, it becomes evident why in the terminology of Islamic philosophers and theologians the fitrah is referred to as the origin of all spiritual matters and goodness, in contrast to tabi'ah (nature), which is referred to as the origin of all material and instinctive matters. Man is a being of free will that continuously chooses the path of the fitrah or the way of tabi'ah, and it is with this free will that he determines his life in the Hereafter, as indicated in the famous hadith: "The World is a plantation for the Hereafter".

:There are two ways of understanding self-confidence

Comprehending ones' abilities, potentials, and building on the existing capabilities in .١ the attempt to satisfy one's desires and attain to the true human identity. This version is in no way in conflict with the spirit of trust in Allah (awj). The advantage of this version is its compatibility with two key religious terms: self-knowledge and .knowledge of Allah's (awj) blessings and the right way of employing them

Egocentrism. That is, to rely solely on one's personal capabilities and knowledge to .٢ the extent of considering one's ambitions and desires as the source of ultimate well-being and success. This understanding is not only in disharmony with religious teachings; it is a mirage, a mere figment of the imagination. This objectionable self-confidence is actually self-centeredness and being over-confident of oneself. It is in allusion to this type of self-confidence that the Commander of the Faithful says, ".“Whosoever trusts in his self will be betrayed many times

The Definition of Tawakkul

Tawakkul comes from the root wikalah and so by derivation means “appointing someone as one's trustee (wakil)”. What is meant by the self-confidence that is in harmony with tawakkul is maintaining one's composition in the face of great predicaments by relying on the endless power of Allah (awj), thereby considering oneself triumphant. It means to struggle resolutely in the face of all the troubles and tribulations that befall one, trusting in Allah (awj) where one feels powerless and not ,ceasing to try. Rather, even where one feels capable

one should know that the real power is Allah (awj). For, in the eyes of the true monotheist, He is the fountainhead of all existing powers, so that viewing the natural phenomena in separation from the Divine will is a kind of polytheism. All natural .causes derive their potency from Him and exist due to His will

But the second interpretation of self-confidence is in no way compatible with tawakkul, for in this sense self-confidence would be to regard one's strengths and capabilities independent of Divine will. And self-reliance and relying on other .(creatures are in opposition to the spirit of trust in Allah (awj

What is' ,(ع) has been related as having said, "I asked Jibra`il (ص) The Prophet tawakkul?' He replied, 'Recognizing the truth that a creature can neither harm nor benefit, and not to have your eyes on the wealth of others. When a servant of Allah acquires these traits, he will act only for Allah and will not have any hope in other than ".'Him. This is the truth and boundary of tawakkul

Detailed Answer

point

In order to properly examine the question of the contradiction of self-confidence—in the context of psychology—with the concept of trusting in God and not trusting in oneself—in the context of religious teachings—one must first analyze the meanings .of the two concepts

Analyzing the definition of self-confidence

Self-confidence is acknowledging one's strengths and capabilities, therefore relying on what one has for achieving what one desires and for attaining to the true essence of humanity. This conception of self-confidence is not in conflict

with religious teachings. Rather it is exactly in line with the will of Allah (awj) and acceptable by the godly people. We are duty bound to attempt to acquire this trait and the failure thereof might result in being deprived of many advantageous things, the least of which might be the lack of success and the inability to achieve Divine satisfaction. Hence, we refer to this conception of self-confidence as the laudable .self-confidence

There are several qualifications that contribute to the positive conception of self-confidence. The first is comprehending oneself, one's capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, duties, and material and spiritual assets. What is the most effective plan for utilizing these assets? These are all points and questions that stem from the two key religious concepts: self-knowledge and recognizing one's God-given blessings .and appropriately exploiting them

This conception of self-confidence is in essence to be aware of the supra-human entity and the lofty aspects of the human being by means of knowing the blessings of Allah (awj). And this is based on the fact that Allah (awj) has bestowed certain blessings on the human being and thus holds him responsible vis-à-vis those blessings and at the end will hold him accountable, asking as to how he employed those blessings. Hence, taking the responsibility of these blessings on one's shoulders is not possible without taking advantage of one's personal assets, without self-confidence, without benefiting from those blessings, or feeling positive. So to reward [unclear] the positive definition of self-confidence: It is the belief

that “I” am one of Allah’s (awj) creatures that has been given blessings by a Being who has control over these blessings and who would not be harmed were He to deprive me of all of them. We would be ungrateful if we did not think of the scheme of .our existence in this manner

We accept the first definition of self-confidence because it reinforces our independence and self-esteem and thus prevents us from being dependent on other creatures as well as underestimating ourselves. In other words, self-confidence is the conscious and beneficial acceptance of our values, assets, and symbols, such that with this lofty human/Islamic self-confidence we can stand up against all instances of timidity, [cultural] disorientation, thereby preventing our subordination to those who .only wear the disguise of humanity

Through self-confidence we will be able to regulate our mind, thereby gaining access to all the golden keys to success. Is it not true that when imperialists decide to enslave a people, their first tactic is to convince the people that they have nothing, that their mentality is backward and that they have fallen behind from modernism and that they are too immature to stand up on their own feet? By such intimidations a nation might fall from the heights of self-confidence to the pits of self-abasement, and seeing itself as inferior it will try to emulate the predator culture. Such emulation is in itself a manifestation of the cultural deficiency of the nation in question and is the beginning of

.its self-alienation, both culturally and religiously

A good number of those who get caught in psychological voids—and as a result get involved in crime—are those who underestimate themselves. The analysis provided by 'Ali Mirzabiygee states that, "Self-esteem plays a major role in one's logical and normal behaviour or on the other hand one's abnormal, unfriendly, and criminal behaviour. Based on the conducted research in this field, self-esteem can prevent, ameliorate, or worsen some types of modes of human behaviour. As narrated in a tradition, "He who is self-abased will become such that there will be no security against his mischief."(۱) Therefore, the positive self-confidence results in self-esteem and is itself the fruit of self-assurance, determination, and capability. "The determination of men of eminence can uproot mountains."(۲) (The Role of (Psychological Needs, pg. ۳۳

Another positive quality of this definition of self-confidence is its harmony with the .spirit of tawakkul in Islamic culture. We will explain this point in more detail later on

The second possible definition for self-confidence is egocentrism—i.e., the absence of any concerns other than one's desires. This could end in such extremes that one might solely depend on his faculties and knowledge, considering his needs and aspirations as the source of absolute good and ultimate success. This illusion is not only in opposition to Islamic teachings; it is also a figment of the imagination. It would be more accurate to refer to this negative definition of self-confidence as egocentrism. It is the latter psychological state that has been the

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۱- Tuhaf al-'Uqul, pg. ۴۸۳: مَنْ هَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ نَفْسُهُ فَلَا تَأْمَنْ شَرَّهُ.

۲- Musnad al-Shahab, vol. ۱, pg. ۳۷۸

cause of many failures and by which the human being has been betrayed: ("Whosoever trusts his ego will be betrayed by it."(1)

Why is this definition of self-confidence deplorable? The following factors all play a role in the negative nature of this state of mind. This conception of self-confidence creates a false self-image in the mind of the human being and thus entails disequilibrium. When one thinks, "What I want should be…Truth is that which corresponds to my opinion and so my opinion should be done…There are no obstacles in my way…I am strong enough so that others are nothing in comparison to me…"—such thoughts can only lead to "personal overestimation". The solidification of this notion would cause "extreme conceit" which will open the way for an unrealistic overestimation of oneself. And without doubt such mental waves and whirlpools will entail "instability" and the distortion of one's true personality.

At any rate, the limits of one's capabilities should be recognized. One should take into consideration all the other factors and realities too. With such awkward self-confidence there will be no possibility of a realistic assessment of one's capabilities. The Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) says, "If you seek Allah's grace, determine the aspects of your capabilities and the limits of your inabilities. Otherwise you would exceed your scope thereby undermining the possibility of progress and Divine grace."(2)

It is for this reason that Islam prohibits such overestimation of oneself and has warned that if a human being does not

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۱- Ghurar al-Hikam, vol. ۵, pg. ۱۶۱ مَنْ وَثَقَ نَفْسَهُ خَانَتْهُ.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۶۶, pg. ۷۹

abandon this state of mind, he would be seized by two entailments: conceit and self-love.

In addition to the detriments you heard regarding ‘ujb—viewing oneself beyond the range of fallibility and being satisfied with one’s deeds—it is an evil tree whose fruit is a range of greater sins... The veil of ‘ujb and the heavy curtain of self-satisfaction blocks one from seeing one’s own weaknesses. And this is a great affliction that prevents the human being from all perfections... And another detriment of ‘ujb is being overconfident of oneself and one’s deeds. This causes the ignorant and unfortunate human being to consider himself free of need of the Truth, exalted is He, therefore neglecting His grace.(١)

The second feature of the negative self-confidence which renders it a deplorable trait is that it implies a notion of independence from Allah (awj), which is practically denying the principle of Divine unity in actions. In the science of theology it has been demonstrated that all existents, motions, and actions in the cosmos derive from the Pure Essence of Allah (awj). He is the cause of causes, the head of the chain of causality. Even our actions are, from one aspect, from Him. He has bestowed upon us strength, choice, and free will, but this Diving agency does not reject the role of the human being. He has bestowed strength and choice, but at the same time we are the doers of our own actions and as such are responsible for them. But this fact does

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١- Ayatullah Khomeini, Forty Hadith, under the explanation of the third hadith

not contradict the agency of Allah (awj), for all that we possess is from Him and will return to Him: "There is no active agent in existence but for Him."(١) Attributing the main role to oneself is tantamount to assuming absolute agency for oneself in opposition to Allah's (awj) absolute will and His boundless rule.

Analyzing the definition of Tawakkul

Tawakkul is derived from the root wikalah and means the appointment of a trustee (wakil). It should go without saying that appointing a trustee is necessary where one is incapable of personally handling the situation, in which case the strength of some one else is employed. It should also be noted that the right trustee should at least have the following four traits: well informed, trustworthy, having the power to undertake the task in question, and concerned for the welfare of the client.

The first interpretation of self-confidence—i.e., self-knowledge and self-assurance along with utilizing all personal capabilities and assets—has no contradiction with tawakkul. For, in addition to the purely religious concepts that are embedded in this interpretation of self-confidence—such as self-knowledge, knowledge, and utilizing the blessings of Allah (awj)—essentially the realistic tawakkul stems from this positive interpretation of self-confidence. For, what is intended by the concept of tawakkul is that the human being, when confronted with tribulations in life, must not feel abased or weak.

Rather, relying on the limitless power of Allah (awj), he must see himself triumphant and victorious. In this light, it becomes clear that tawakkul possesses an inspiring, revitalizing,

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١- Ayatullah Nasir Makarim Shirazi, Payam Qur`an, vol. ٣, pg. ٢٧۴

.and regenerating meaning that increases one’s endurance and resilience

Hence, relying on Allah (awj) should not be construed in any other way but that the human being, when faced with the troubles and vicissitudes of life, when exposed to the animosity of enemies and the stubbornness of detractors, or in running into difficulties or seeming impasses, must endeavour to open the doors of success and when incapable, rely on Allah (awj) thereby continuing to struggle. More accurately, even where one is capable of undertaking a task, Allah (awj) should still be recognized as the principal agent in the world, for from the perspective of a monotheist, the (fountainhead of power and strength is Allah (awj

Those who assume that being cognizant of the world of causes and natural elements is in opposition to the spirit of tawakkul are in deep error. For dissociating the natural elements from the will of God is itself a type of polytheism. Is it not true that even natural elements owe their efficacy to Him and exist due to His will? Of course, if such elements and causes are considered independent entities in contrast to His will—then .such a view is in opposition to the spirit of tawakkul

The main point is that self-assurance, taking advantage of Allah’s (awj) blessings, utilizing one’s capabilities, and hopefulness are not in contrast to tawakkul. The the crown of those who rely on God, never failed to seize any ,(ص) Prophet of Islam opportunity, plan, or positive tactic, nor did

he neglect any natural element, and he used to warn the believers, “You can… You are superior.” Why should we not consider “You are superior” as the rightful interpretation and the true scheme for the conformity of tawakkul and self-confidence.

The second interpretation of self-confidence is in contradiction with tawakkul because relying on other people is in diametrical opposition to relying on God. That is, living as a liability for others and being dependent on them means a lack of independence. For relying on God frees the human being from dependence (which is the cause of human disgrace and bondage) and bestows on him freedom and self-confidence.

The Prophet of Islam (ص) has been narrated as having said, “I inquired from the Messenger of Revelation, Jibra`il (ع), ‘What is tawakkul?’ He said, ‘Being aware that a creature can neither harm nor provide nor block [others’ sustenance] from being provided; that you take your eyes off of the possession of other people. When a servant of Allah has thus transformed himself, he will act only for Allah and will have hope only in Him. This is the truth and definition of tawakkul.’”(١)

Question ١٥: Attaining Perfection

point

Question: How can perfection be attained?

Brief Answer

point

This topic needs to be discussed in three parts.

١. Definition of Kamal (Perfection) and How It Differs from Tamam (Completion) and Progress

Completion applies when speaking about the parts of a thing, as in the case where a thing is composed of several parts and all the parts are put together, it is said that that thing is complete. In other words, completion pertains to the parts

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۱ - ۲۶۱ .Ma’ani al-Akhbar, pg: فَقُلْتُ: وَمَا التَّوَكُّلُ على اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ؟ فَقَالَ: اَلْعِلْمُ بِأَنَّ الْمَخْلُوقَ لا يَضُرُّ وَلا يَنْفَعُ وَلا يُعْطِي وَلا يَمْنَعُ، وَاسْتِعْمالُ الْيَأْسِ مِنَ الْخَلْقِ، فَإِذَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ كَذٰلِكَ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ لِأَحَدٍ سِوى اللّٰهِ وَلَمْ يَرْجُ وَلَمْ يَخَفْ سِوَى اللّٰهِ وَلَمْ يَطْمَعْ فِي أَحَدٍ سِوى اللّٰهِ فَهٰذَا هُوَ التَّوَكُّلُ.

that are necessary to bring something into existence. But perfection pertains to the levels and stages of something. When something reaches completion, there still might be more perfect states for it. Thus a thing could be complete but not perfect. Also, the term progress could apply to a movement that is merely horizontal. However, elevation is embedded in the meaning of perfection. For, perfection is meaningful only in the context of an ascending and vertical movement. Hence, it is possible to achieve .progress without attaining to perfection

Human Perfection from the Point of View of Islam .۲

a. Perfection is in vision and acquisition. One must fully comprehend the Divine .sciences and act accordingly

b. Perfection is dependent on sensing, for the human being is compelled to action .when feeling threatened and realizing one's own imperfection

Different Views on Perfection .۳

a. Ideology of Power

According to this ideology, the perfect human being is synonymous with the powerful human being. The more powerful one is, the higher the level of perfection he has attained to. Even if knowledge is of value, it is due to the fact that it enables the .human being to strengthen himself and to subjugate the surrounding environment

This view has two problems. First, knowledge in this ideology has no intrinsic value and sanctity. It is power alone that is considered perfection. Second, not only is knowledge not perfection and a means to transcendence, it serves as grounds for .war and the exploitation of the weak

From the point of view of Islam, power is not intrinsically negative. There are instances where it has been promoted, but with the

condition that it be employed in the way of advocating moral values and social .reformation

b. The View of the Philosophers

From the perspective of the philosophers, perfection can be sought in two things: wisdom (which is the comprehension of the universal truths of the cosmos) and justice (which is the tempering of the instincts and the human faculties by the intellect, (or in other words, the intellect dominating the human faculties

Islam also considers wisdom a virtue. The Qur`an refers to wisdom as "abundant good" (۲:۲۶۹) and recognizes it as a means of perfection. Justice is also emphasized by Islam. However, in Islam the intellect's domination over the sensual and psychic .faculties is considered effective only when it is reinforced by Revelation

c. The Mystic Ideology

Mystics are of the opinion that reality is nondual. Reality is God and all else is the radiance of His existence. Thus, the human being attains to perfection when he comes to view only Him and nothing else, when he reaches annihilation in the Truth. The closer one ascends to the Truth, the more perfect he becomes. And the path of this journey is the heart, and one must combat one's ego and overcome it and belittle .it so as to erase any trace of egoism

Although Islam approves of the path of the heart and vision, it also supports the intellect and has referred to the latter as the "inward prophet". In contrast to mysticism, both the personal and the social aspects of life have been recognized, and so the perfect human being is

.he who perfects himself in both aspects

Another defect of the mystical perspective is that it undermines self-esteem and self-worth to the extent of demeaning the individual. Islam does not allow such excessive self-humiliation. From the view point of Islam, at the same time that the believer must .combat his ego and tame it, he must avoid ignoble and unbecoming acts

Detailed Answer

Definition of Perfection

First, we must define perfection. Tamam (completion) is contrasted with naqs :(deficiency) and so is kamal (perfection). In the Noble Qur`an we read

Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon .(you(١

That is, the Qur`an considers tamam and kamal different in meaning: it employs tamam in the context of deficiency in blessing and kamal in the context of deficiency .in religion

At this point it is necessary to explain how kamal (perfection) differs in meaning from tamam (completion) and pishraft (progress). If an object is composed of several parts, such as a building, until all the parts are put together, it is said that the object is deficient and incomplete and when all the parts have been assembled, it is said that .the object is complete

However, perfection applies to levels and stages. For instance, a new born child, although healthy and complete with all the natural parts and organs, is in one respect deficient and must pass through the various levels of perfection by means of training .and education in order to attain to perfection

In other words, tamam is used where

١- ٣ Surat al-Ma`idah (٥), Verse: } اَلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكَمْ دِينَكَمْ وَ أَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكَمْ نِعْمَتِى... {

all the necessary parts for composing a whole are present, otherwise that whole is deficient in its essence. On the other hand, kamal is used when an object has reached completion but has the capacity to improve and acquire higher degrees. Thus, an .object could be complete but not perfect

But as to the difference of kamal (perfection) from pishraft (progress), it can be said that the idea of elevation is embedded in the meaning of perfection. Perfection is a movement but a vertical one, from lower degrees to higher and loftier degrees, unlike .progress which can also apply to a horizontal movement

For instance, if an army is at war and is conquering enemy territory and moving ahead, it is said that the army is progressing, not perfecting. Therefore, social perfection denotes human elevation in the social context not merely progress, for there are many changes that might be considered as progress for the human being or .the society but might not necessarily indicate perfection or elevation

Human Perfection from the Point of View of Islam

Perfection Dependent on Vision and Acquisition .۱

One must endeavour to fully understand the Divine sciences and conduct himself accordingly. That is, he must put his knowledge into action. Just as virtues are interrelated with perfect and complete acts of worship, vices are interrelated with .deficient and ineffective acts of worship

Perfection Contingent on Sensing Danger .۲

He who knows that something dangerous is threatening him and might result in his being left hungry and thirsty in the middle of nowhere will embark on solving the dangerous situation. The person who constantly reminds himself of the hardships

of the hereafter and the chastisement of hell, realizing the danger, will struggle to attain to perfection and avoid all deficiencies. For unless one feels the deficiency and insufficiency of his state, he will not advance toward perfection. By the same token, deficiency and backwardness are the results of ignorance and the complacent and .self-deceiving notions of being perfect

But in what does human perfection lie? What is the path to attaining to perfection? There are divergent views regarding this question. We will limit ourselves to three .views in addition to Islam's assessment of each of them

The Ideology of Power

According to this view, the perfect human is the strong human. The stronger the human being is and the more firmly he controls his surroundings, the closer he is to perfection. Darwin's theory of evolution—known as "competition to survive"—is based on this notion. For the exponents of this view, knowledge is valuable only in so far as it enables the human being to strengthen his grip on his environment, thus they exploit knowledge for the sake of power. In their view, truth and justice have no .reality or meaning other than power

Two criticisms come to mind regarding this viewpoint. First, knowledge enjoys no sacred place in this ideology, rather it is only a means for acquiring power, and it is power alone that can be considered perfection for the human being. Second, not only is knowledge not conducive to perfection or moral elevation, it prepares the grounds for conflict. It serves as a tool

in the hands of the aggressors and oppressors. Therefore, humanity does not advance by employing knowledge as it should, for the imperialist powers utilize it to .exploit the weaker nations

Islam advocates the use of power, but the sort of power that is in harmony with lofty human values, with compassion and kindness. There are numerous verses in the Qur`an that encourage the Muslim community to strengthen itself, but the power intended in such verses is that which would be utilized in the way of fighting oppression and defending the rights of the oppressed, the sort of power that would .pave the way for upholding justice and moral values

Philosophers' Perspective on Human Perfection

According to philosophers, human perfection lies in two things. The first is wisdom, which is comprehending the reality of things as they are in themselves and the ,general order of the cosmos. To corroborate this point, they cite the following verse

He gives wisdom to whomever He wishes, and he who is given wisdom, is certainly .(given an abundant good(١

.Thus they consider wisdom a Divine gift and a means to perfection

The second truth which constitutes perfection in the view of the philosophers is justice. By that they intend moral justice, i.e., creating a balance among the human .instincts and faculties, bringing them under the supervision of the intellect

From the Islamic point of view wisdom is also seen as a means to perfection and, as was explained, more than just being beneficial to humanity, wisdom is a good in itself; meaning that

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١- Surat al-Baqarah (٢), verse ٢۶٩: { يُؤْتِى الْحِكْمَهَ مَنْ يَشَآءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَهَ فَقَدْ أُوتِىَ خَيْراً كَثِيراً وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّآ أُولُوْا الأَلْبَابِ }

it should be sought as an end in itself and not as a means for something else. Moreover, justice is also something which Islam underscores. It also stresses the importance of balancing the faculties and instincts and the intellect's management of them. However, Islam does not consider this sufficient. According to Islam, the intellect must be complemented by faith, for reason alone is not potent enough. It is .the intellect monitored by Revelation and faith that is desirable in the Islamic context

Mystics' Perspective on Human Perfection

Mystics are of the opinion that reality is nondual, i.e., God. All else is His radiance and a form of the reality. Whatever seems to be real as such is due to Him. The human being can reach perfection only after realizing the truth and attaining to it, to which they refer as "attaining to the Truth," indicating annihilation in the Truth. He must be comprehended before anything else, even prior to comprehending oneself. Although the unity expounded by the mystics should not be understood as indicating incarnation or God becoming identical with the creation. Rather, what is meant is to see Him alongside everything, within everything, and prior to everything. And if the human being fails to attain to the truth, he is imperfect and veiled from the truth. The :path leading to the truth is that of the heart, not reason, syllogism, nor philosophy

,Syllogists have legs of wood

.But legs of wood are dangerously unsteady

The mount for this journey is love and intimacy. And the ego must

.be exterminated in this way

In the mystical worldview, some issues have been disparaged with which Islam disagrees. Islam approves of love and spiritual wayfaring but at the same time supports the intellect, calling it the "inward prophet" and counting it as one of the Divine blessings. In mysticism esotericism has been overemphasized, thus undermining the outward aspects of spirituality and emphasizing seclusion and withdrawal from social life. Islam on the other hand, while stressing the importance of personal aspects, spiritual purification, and spiritual retreat in God, encourages the social aspects as well. Islam advocates worship but along with involvement in the .society, hailing those who are worshippers by night and warriors by day

According to Islam, the Universal Man is he who is a man of worship, of kneeling and prostration before the Lord, but also one who is dutiful vis-à-vis his social (responsibilities—i.e., social reformation and enjoining good and forbidding evil.(١

In the mystical worldview, attaining to the Truth and Unveiling and liberation from egoism requires the annihilation of the ego, belittling it to the very extreme without being disturbed by such practices. Rather one should consider them as the way to perfection. Islam, however, does not approve of such measures. For, it views the believer with respect and commands him to defend his dignity. Islam encourages combating one's ego and self-esteem concurrently. That is, it approves of combating one's ego so long as it does not lead to being disgraced and belittled. The value of the believer

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These traits can be found in the Noble Qur`an: Surat al-Tawbah (٩), verse ١١٢ and -١ .Surat al-Fath (۴٩), veresse ٢٩ are two examples

is very high in the Islamic value system, so much so that it has been considered equal .to that of the Kaaba

Question ۱۶: The Angels and free–will

point

Question: We know that some angels do nothing but worship Allah (awj). Is this worship of theirs performed of their own freewill? If not, does Allah (awj) have need ?of such worship

Brief Answer

No benefit from any creature's worship—whether it has freewill or not—reaches Allah (awj). Rather worship that is offered out of freewill is the cause for the spiritual advancement of the worshipper. However, for creatures that worship Allah (awj) without freewill, such as the angels, their worship is simply an intrinsic part of their existence. Their subservience to Allah (awj) stems from their perception of His .greatness, and does not benefit Allah (awj) in the least

Detailed Answer

Angels are supernatural beings. We can only know of their existence by way of revelation or through individual supernatural experience. Angels are immaterial and can therefore not be described quantitatively or qualitatively. However, they can appear in human form. The Qur`an speaks of Mariam's  encounter with the Noble Spirit when she saw it in human form.(۱) It also tells us of the angels who visited in the form of men.(۲) Additionally, it is narrated that Jibra`il (ع) and Lut (ع) Ibrahim in the form of Dahyah al-Kalbi, the (ص) would appear before the Prophet Muhammad .Prophet's milk-brother

We know that angels are limited beings that vary from individual to individual. Some are consigned with the responsibility of meting out punishment in

١ - Surat Maryam (١٩), Verses ١٦-١٩: } وَاذْكُرْ فِى الْكِتَابِ مَرْيَمَ إِذْ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا. فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا. قَالَتْ إِنِّى أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَٰنِ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنتَ تَقِيًّا. قَالَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلاَمًا زَكِيًّا {

٢ - Surat Hud (١١), Verses ٦٩-٨١: } وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا سَلاَمًا قَالَ سَلاَمٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ أَنْ جَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيذٍ. فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَيْدِيَهُمْ لاَ تَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لاَ تَخَفْ إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ. وَامْرَأَتُهُ قَائِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنَاهَا بِإِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ وَرَاءِ إِسْحَاقَ يَعْقُوبَ. قَالَتْ يَا وَيْلَتَا أَأَلِدُ وَأَنَا عَجُوزٌ وَهَذَا بَعْلِى شَيْخًا إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ. قَالُوا أَتَعْجَبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ. فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاءَتْهُ الْبُشْرَى يُجَادِلُنَا فِى قَوْمِ لُوطٍ. إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ. يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ هَٰذَا إِنَّهُ قَدْ جَاءَ أَمْرُ رَبِّكَ وَإِنَّهُمْ آتِيهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُودٍ. وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِيءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالَ هَٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيبٌ. وَجَاءَهُ قَوْمُهُ يُهْرَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ هَؤُلاَءِ بَنَاتِى هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلاَ تُخْزُونِى فِى ضَيْفِى أَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَشِيدٌ. قَالُوا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِى بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيدُ. قَالَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِى بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ آوِى إِلَى رُكْنٍ شَدِيدٍ. قَالُوا يَا لُوطُ إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ فَأَسْرِ بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِنْ اللَّيْلِ وَلاَ يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ إِلاَّ امْرَأَتَكَ إِنَّهُ مُصِيبُهَا مَا أَصَابَهُمْ إِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ أَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِيبٍ {

this world, some in Purgatory (al-Barzakh), and some in the Hereafter. Some are entrusted with the task of writing the deeds of men, and some write the decrees of .(Allah (awj

Some manage the day-to-day affairs of the cosmos, and some are messengers who carry divine revelation. Some inspire the hearts of men and some are protectors and helpers of the believers. Some have higher rank and give orders to others. Some are responsible for sustenance, some for rain, and some take the souls of people when they die. In the same vein, some angels are perpetually in a state of prostration, some .(continually bow, and some forever glorify Allah (awj

Some eternally circumambulate the Ka'bah and pay tribute to the graves of the Friends of Allah (awj). Some seek forgiveness and intercession for the believers. Others curse the disbelievers, pagans, hypocrites and staunch opponents of the Prophet's household. In all cases, each angel is assigned a specific task. He neither has power to perform more than what he has been commanded nor to fall short of his .task

The essence of worship ('ibadah) is to display servitude ('ubudiyyah) to one's master. One's display of servitude is directly proportional to his perception of Allah's (awj) greatness. Such a display, therefore, is an indication of the spiritual perfection of the creature, not a deficiency in the Creator. It is not necessary that any benefit from a creature's worship reach Allah (awj) in order for Allah (awj) to be able to say that

His purpose in creating man and jinn was that they worship him. Rather, the fact that their creation is an awesome display of Allah's (awj) infinite power and endless beneficence is enough.

If a creature has freewill, his worship will result in a purification of his soul and his gradual advancement through the ranks of servitude. Therefore, the benefit of his worship returns to himself not to Allah (awj) in such a way that were he not to worship Allah (awj), he would not harm Allah (awj) in the least. Rather, if he fails to worship Allah (awj), it is himself will be harmed!

Apparently, some of the angels also questioned whether Allah (awj) needs worship done out of freewill. When Allah (awj) informed them that that He would create a regent on earth, they said,

"We already sing your praises. Why would you create someone on earth who will cause corruption and spill blood?" So Allah bestowed on Adam His special knowledge —a knowledge that the angels were incapable of learning. The angels proclaimed, "We possess no knowledge except that which you have taught us." They thereby conceded their own inferiority to Adam (ع) and fell down in prostration before him.(١)

It is obvious that the worship that issues from freewill is more valuable than worship to which one is compelled. The former is the actualization of one's potential while the latter is simply a result of one's stagnant and constant present state in which there is no room for future development and

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١- Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verses ٣٠-٣٣: } وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلاَئِكَهِ إِنِّی جَاعِلٌ فِی الأَرْضِ خَلِیفَهً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِیهَا مَنْ یُفْسِدُ فِیهَا وَیَسْفِکُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِکَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَکَ قَالَ إِنِّی أَعْلَمُ مَا لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ. وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الأَسْمَاءَ کُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلاَئِکَهِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِی بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلاَءِ إِنْ کُنتُمْ صَادِقِینَ. قَالُوا سُبْحَانَکَ لاَ عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلاَّ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّکَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِیمُ الْحَکِیمُ. قَالَ یَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَکُمْ إِنِّی أَعْلَمُ غَیْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا کُنتُمْ تَکْتُمُونَ {

.from which the slightest slip means a fall to perdition

describes the angels in the following way: “You have created (ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib the angels and placed them in the heavens. They do not feel fatigue nor are they oblivious nor do they sin. Among all Your creatures, they know the most about You, are most fearful of You, are the nearest to You, and the most obedient ... Their intellect does not err. Their bodies do not tire. Neither did they issue from loins nor .were they concealed by wombs

They were not created from filthy semen. You created them in a special way and placed them in the heavens. Through their nearness to You is an honour for them. With Your revelation You entrusted them. From sickness and tribulations You protected them. From sin You purified them. If You had not empowered them, they would have no power. If You had not made them constant, they would have no constancy. If it were not for Your mercy, they would not obey You. And if it were not .for You, they would not exist

However, despite their station, obedience, nearness to You, and unwavering attention to You and Your commands, if You were to reveal a glimmer of Your reality —a reality that You have kept hidden from them, their actions would seem insignificant, they would be ashamed of themselves, and they would know that they have not worshipped You as You deserve to be worshipped. Glorified are You

(who are the Creator, the Object of Worship, and the One who tests his servants."(۱)

:words make three issues clear (ع) A reflection of Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib's

۱. The secret behind their worship: The angels' worship of Allah (awj) is a natural consequence of their experiential knowledge of Allah (awj). However, because their .existential capacity is limited, their knowledge of Allah (awj) is also limited

۲. was (ع) The secret behind the aforementioned objection of the angels when Adam .created: The root of this objection was their limited knowledge

۳. When it became :(ع) The secret behind their admission and prostration before Adam clear to them that they were incapable of understanding the reasons behind Allah's .(awj) actions, they admitted to this shortcoming and prostrated before Adam

To recap, because the freewill of angels is not like that of man, their worship does nothing to raise their station. However, if they were to abandon their worship, they would fall. Their worship stems from their knowledge of Allah's (awj) greatness on one hand and their own insignificance on the other. No benefit from their worship reaches Allah (awj). Rather their worship is a manifestation of Allah's (awj) .omnipotence

Question ۱۷: Satan's Influence

point

?Question: How does Satan influence our thoughts

Brief Answer

Before we can investigate the influence of Satan on our thoughts, we must gain an .understanding of who Satan is

Lexicographers differ over the linguistic root of the word shaytan (satan). The strongest opinion states that it comes from "shatana" meaning "to be far." As it is ,known

۱ - Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. ۲, pg. ۲۰۷: وَ قـالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنينَ (ع) فِى خِلْقَهِ الْمَلاَـئِكَهِ: وَالْمَلاَـئِكَهُ خَلَقْتَهُمْ وَأَسْـكَنْتَهُمْ سَمٰوَاتِـکَ فَلَيْسَ فِيهِمْ فَتْرَهٌ وَلاَـ عِنْـدَهُمْ غَفْلَهٌ وَلاَـ فِيهِمْ مَعْصِـيَهٌ، هُمْ أَعْلَمُ خَلْقِـکَ بِـکَ، وَأَخْوَفُ خَلْقِـکَ مِنْکَ، وَأَقْرَبُ خَلْقِکَ إِلَيْکَ وَأَعْمَلُهُمْ بِطَاعَتِکَ، لاَ يَغْشَاهُمْ نَوْمُ الْعُيُوْنِ وَلاَ سَهْوُ الْعُقُوْلِ وَلاَ فَتَرَهُ الأَبْدَانِ، لَمْ يَسْكُنُوْا الأَصْلابَ وَلَمْ تَتْضَمَّهُمُ الأَرْحَامُ وَلَمْ تَخْلُقْهُمْ مِنْ مَآءٍ مَهِيْنٍ ، أَنْشَأْتَهُمْ إِنْشَاءًا فَأَسْكَنْتَهُمْ سَمَاوَاتِکَ وَأَكْرَمْتَهُمْ بِجِوَارِکَ وَائْتَمَنْتَهُمْ عَلى وَحْيِکَ وَجَنَّبْتَهُمْ الآفَاتِ وَوَقَيْتَهُمْ الْبَلِيَّاتِ وَطَهَّرْتَهُمْ مِنَ الـذُّنُوبِ وَلَوْلاَـ قُوَّتُـکَ لَمْ يَقْوُوْا وَلَوْلاَ تَثْبِيْتُکَ لَمْ يَثْبُتُوْا وَلَوْلاَ رَحْمَتُکَ لَمْ يُطِيْعُوا وَلَوْلاَ أَنْتَ لَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا ، أمّا إِنَّهُمْ عَلى مَكَـانَتِهِمْ مِنْکَ وَطَـوْعِيَّتِهِمْ إِيَّاکَ وَمَنْزِلَتِهِمْ عِنْـدَکَ وَقِلَّهِ غَفْلَتِهِمْ عَنْ أَمْرِکَ لَوْ عَـايَنُوْا مَـا خَفِىَ عَنْهُمْ مِنْـکَ لَـاحْتَقَرُوا أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَلَأَزَرُوا عَلى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَعَلِمُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَمْ يَعْبُدُوْکَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِکَ سُبْحَانَکَ خَالِقاً وَمَعْبُوداً مَا أَحْسَنَ بَلاءُکَ عِنْدَ خَلْقِکَ.

shaytan in ‘Arabic, is a common noun, and can therefore be applied to any of a number of beings. However, the archetypical satan—the leader of them all—is known (in Arabic as Iblis.(۱

Satan is a member of the class of beings called jinn. Like all jinn, he can transform himself into various forms, sometimes appearing as a man, sometimes as an animal. The only limitation placed on him is that he cannot manifest himself as a prophet or Imam. It is mainly through these transformations that Satan misguides people. At watershed moments in a person’s life, he appears as a well-wishing advisor and lays .the groundwork for his destruction

said, “The old man who was the first to (ع) Salman al-Farisi narrates that Imam ‘Ali pledge his allegiance to Abu Bakr and whose forehead was calloused from extensive ”.prostrations, was the accursed Satan

However, Satan does not always employ this method. He exists in an intermediate state between the material and the immaterial realms. For this reason, he cannot directly affect the immaterial spirit of the human being. Rather, he infiltrates a person’s thoughts by means of one aspect of the human soul called al-nafs al-ammarah (the lower soul). This is the animalistic aspect of the soul, that can be transformed into al-nafs al-mutma’innah (the higher soul) through training and enhancement. It is through temptation and by showing the lower soul manifestations of what it desires that Satan paves the way to misguide man. For this reason, Satan is only a part

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Iblis will be denoted as Satan with a capital ‘s.’ When satan as a common noun is - ۱ ’.intended, it will be spelled with a lower case ‘s

.of the cause of human misguidance

These manifestations take on different forms, yet they all conform to what the lower :soul desires

The beautification of ugly deeds: By making ugly actions appear beautiful, Satan .١ effectively strips the otherwise inherent ugliness of sin and mitigates the societal taboo associated with sin in such a way that man easily falls into the trap of sin. This .phenomenon can be witnessed in a person who rationalizes his wrong actions

False promises: Through false promises and unattainable hopes, Satan renders .٢ man heedless of the Hereafter, death, and even Allah (awj). Such a person becomes a slave to his desires and is prepared to go to any lengths to attain the attainable, even .(if it means sinning against Allah (awj

Fear: Satan scares man with thoughts of the future, compelling him to accumulate .٣ .wealth, flee from jihad, aid the unjust, etc

Detailed Answer

To properly understand the answer to this question, we must first gain an .understanding of the nature of Satan

Lexicographers differ over the linguistic root of the word "satan." The strongest opinion states that it comes from "shatana" meaning "to be far." It is for this reason ".that anyone that distances man from his Lord is called a "satan

Many exegetes of the Qur`an believe that a "satan" is any mischievous being that has been misguided. According to this opinion, "satan" is a common noun that can be applied to any of a number of members, whether jinn or human. However, Iblis is a proper name

(for the particular satan who refused to prostrate before Adam.(1)

The Qur`an explicitly states that Satan is a jinn(2) and is made of fire. The jinn are in an intermediate state between physical and immaterial and can manifest themselves as various physical beings. Human beings, on the other hand, are composed of a body and soul. Man's soul in turn has two aspects. One aspect is Godly in nature. It is alternatively called the spirit (al-ruh) and the higher soul (al-nafs al-mutma'innah).

The other aspect of the human soul is animalistic in nature and is called the lower soul (al-nafs al-ammarah). To gain control over man, Satan must access this lower soul. Being immaterial himself, he cannot establish direct contact with man's physical body. It is this connection between Satan and the lower soul of man that is called a "whispered temptation" (al-waswas) in Qur`anic terminology.

Therefore, Satan is only a part of the cause and cannot misguide man by himself. Rather he invites man to that which his lower soul desires. Man can then choose to follow Satan's temptations or the laws of Allah (awj) and the standards of his intellect. It is for this reason that Allah (awj) admonishes man in the following way:

"Do not follow in Satan's footsteps, for he is your manifest enemy."(3)

How exactly does Satan incite a person's irrational desires to push him towards sin? We will enumerate several of the techniques that Satan employs for this purpose:

1. As stated earlier, Satan, being a jinn,

۱- Surat al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۳۴: وَإِذْ قُلْـــنَا لِلْمَلاَئِكَهِ اسْـجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ أَبـى وَاسْـتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ
۲- Surat al-Kahf (۱۸), Verse ۵۰: وَإِذْ قُلْـنَا لِلْمَلاَئِكَهِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلاَّ إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِ...
۳- Surat al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۲۰۸: ... وَلاَ تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

is able to manifest himself in different physical forms. At various critical points, he presents himself as a well-wishing advisor for the express purpose of misguiding people. There is ample mention of such instances in history, and it is even possible .that such instances have presented themselves in our own lives

For example, it is narrated from Salman al-Farisi concerning the incident of Saqifah: asked, "Do you know the man who ascended the pulpit and (ع) Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib preceded everyone else in pledging his allegiance to Abu Bakr?" I said, "No. But I saw that he was an old man who leaned heavily on his cane, and I saw that on his forehead was a large callous that was the result of lengthy prostrations. He was the first to ascend the pulpit. He expressed with tears running down his cheeks, 'Praise be to the Allah that did not take my life so that I could see you here. Extend your hand that I may pledge allegiance to you.' He extended his hand and pledged allegiance, (ع) then he came down from the pulpit and left the masjid." Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib asked, "Salman, do you know who that was?" I said, "No, but he upset me. It seemed said, (ع) as though he spoke facetiously of the Prophet's death." Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib ("That was Satan—may Allah curse him."(١

The beautification of ugly deeds: Satan makes ugly deeds seem beautiful so that .٢ people begin to

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١ - al-Kafi, vol. ٨, pp. ٣٤٣-٣٤٤: فَقَالَ لِی یَا سَلْمَانُ هَلْ تَدْرِی مَنْ أَوَّلُ مَنْ بَایَعَهُ عَلَی مِنْبَرِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ص)؟ قُلْتُ: لَا أَدْرِی إِلَّا أَنِّی رَأَیْتُ فِی ظُلَّهِ بَنِی سَاعِدَهَ حِینَ خَصَمَتِ الْأَنْصَارُ وَ کَانَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ بَایَعَهُ بَشِیرُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ وَ أَبُو عُبَیْدَهَ بْنُ الْجَرَّاحِ ثُمَّ عُمَرُ ثُمَّ سَالِمٌ قَالَ لَسْتُ أَسْأَلُکَ عَنْ هَذَا وَ لَکِنْ أَتَدْرِی أَوَّلَ مَنْ بَایَعَهُ حِینَ صَعِدَ عَلَی مِنْبَرِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ص) قُلْتُ لَا وَ لَکِنِّی رَأَیْتُ شَیْخاً کَبِیراً مُتَوَکِّئاً عَلَی عَصَاهُ بَیْنَ عَیْنَیْهِ سَجَّادَهٌ شَدِیدُ التَّشْمِیرِ صَعِدَ إِلَیْهِ أَوَّلَ مَنْ صَعِدَ وَ هُوَ یَبْکِی وَ یَقُولُ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِی لَمْ یُمِتْنِی مِنَ الدُّنْیَا حَتَّی رَأَیْتُکَ فِی هَذَا الْمَکَانِ ابْسُطْ یَدَکَ فَبَسَطَ یَدَهُ فَبَایَعَهُ ثُمَّ نَزَلَ فَخَرَجَ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ فَقَالَ عَلِیٌّ (ع) هَلْ تَدْرِی مَنْ هُوَ قُلْتُ لَا وَ لَقَدْ سَاءَتْنِی مَقَالَتُهُ کَأَنَّهُ شَامِتٌ بِمَوْتِ النَّبِیِّ (ص) فَقَالَ ذَاکَ إِبْلِیسُ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ.

gravitate toward them. This phenomenon is referred to in the Qur`an as "the confounding of truth and falsehood."(1) Beautifying ugly deeds is a relatively easy task that conforms to base human desires. It is for this reason that the following verse was revealed:

"Satan made their actions seem beautiful to them, and then diverted them from Allah's path."(2)

3. False promises: By making false promises and encouraging one's farfetched hopes, Satan keeps a person's mind engaged in thoughts that are far from reality. As a result, the person remains heedless of Allah (awj). The following verse mentions this phenomenon:

"Satan promises them and compels them to entertain farfetched hopes."(3)

4. Fear: Another of Satan's tricks is to frighten people about the future. Such fear results in hopelessness, cynicism in Allah (awj), a lack of trust in Allah (awj), and finally complete abstention from any benevolent actions. For instance, Satan frightens people of poverty to such an extent that they are driven to miserliness, as the Quran states:

"Satan threatens you with poverty and enjoins you toward sin."(4)

Question 18: Power of Satan and Jinn

point

Question: To what extent do Satan and the other jinn have power over human beings?

Brief Answer

The words "satan" and "jinn" are repeatedly mentioned in the Qur`an. There is also a chapter in the Qur`an named "al-Jinn". "Satan" is a common noun that denotes any creature that is mischievous, misleading, and delinquent, whether it be human or not. "Iblis" is a proper noun and is the 'Arabic name of the particular satan who deceived

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١- Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ٤٢: وَلاَ تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْـتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

٢- Surat al-Nahl (١۶), Verse ۶٣: تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلـى أُمَمٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

٣- Surat al-Nisa` (۴), Verse ١٢٠: يَعِدُهُمْ وَيُمَنِّيهِمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلاَّ غُرُوراً

۴- Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ٢۶٨: اَلشَّيْطانُ يَعِـدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِـدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلاً وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

.and even now lays in wait for any opportunity to deceive the sons of Adam (ع) Eve

The word “jinn” is etymologically derived from a word meaning “to hide” or “to be hidden.” It denotes a creature made of fire that possesses both a body and a soul. The jinn are held legally accountable before Allah (awj) and can choose to believe or .disbelieve

Some people’s understanding of the jinn is full of hyperbole and fantastic stories, while others reject their existence all together—repudiating even true accounts of jinn. The Qur`an and ahadith describe jinn as powerful creatures. For example, in Surat al-Naml (٢٧), Verse ٣٩, the Qur`an recounts the story of an ‘ifrit (one kind of jinn) quicker than you“ (ع) who claimed to be able to bring the throne of Bilqis to Sulayman ”.can stand up

did not repudiate this jinn’s claim, thus indicating (ع) It should be noted that Sulayman that he truly possessed the power. However, one must be careful not to exaggerate such information out of proportion, thereby claiming that jinn have infinite power. .((Such a belief is tantamount to shirk (the attribution of partners to Allah (awj

No creature, no matter how powerful, can act without Allah’s (awj) sanction. For this reason, Satan has power to misguide only those people who have relinquished their belief in one Allah (awj) and have surrendered to the temptations of Satan. Accordingly, Satan himself admits that he has no power over Allah’s (awj) sincere ,servants when he swears

I shall“

(misguide them all except Your sincere servants."(١

Satan's sole influence over man is by way of whispering temptations. He can never strip man of his free will. In philosophical terms, Satan's non-materiality is not complete, therefore he cannot reach the lofty station that the spirit of the righteous enjoys. Giving into the temptation of the carnal soul (al-nafs al-'ammarah) opens the way for satanic influence thereby pulling man into Satan's traps. The sole respite from his grasp is to turn one's attention to Allah (awj) and seek his protection. Allah (awj) ,says

(You (Satan) have no power over my servants."(٢"

Detailed Answer

The Etymology of Satan and Jinn

We begin our discussion by analyzing the words "satan" and "jinn," and then .investigate the limits of Satan's power

Satan" means "banished" or "mischievous". In its singular form, "satan" has been" used ٧١ times in the Qur`an and in its plural form, ١٨ times. Both the Qur`an and .ahadith indicate that Satan is one of the jinn

Satan" is a common noun that denotes any creature that is mischievous, misleading," and delinquent, whether it be human or not. "Iblis" is a proper noun and is the 'Arabic and even now lays in (ع) name of the particular satan who deceived Adam and Eve .wait for any opportunity to deceive the sons of Adam

The Etymology of Jinn

The word "jinn" has been used ٢٢ times in the Qur`an. "Jinn" is derived from a word denoting "to hide" or "to be hidden." Jinn are created from fire or from an amalgam of fire. In the language of the Qur`an, jinn

١- Surat al-Hijr (١٥), Verse ٣٩-٤٠: ﴿ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ. إِلاَّ عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴾

٢- Ibid., Verse ٤٢: ﴿ إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ...﴾

are conscious beings with free will that are hidden from human perception under normal circumstances. Like mankind, jinn are legally accountable to Allah (awj) and .can choose to believe or disbelieve. They will be raised on the Day of Judgment

Mulla Sadra describes the jinn in the following terms: "Jinn have substantial existence both in this corporeal realm and in the unseen or imaginal world. Now, as for their existence in this world, it is as we explained before—there is no substance that has any type of subtlety and composure whatsoever but that it contains a spirit and a soul which has been infused into it from the source of Pure Activity. Perhaps the reason why jinn can manifest and hide themselves at different times lies in the subtlety of their bodies. They can disperse the components of their bodies and then collate them. When they collate their bodily components, they can be seen. And when they disperse themselves, they become invisible like water vapour which appears like clouds when ".condensed and disappears when heated

Just like human beings, jinn possess a body and spirit and are conscious and have free will. Some are male and others female. They reproduce and are legally accountable to Allah (awj). They are born and they die. They can choose to believe or .disbelieve

The Relationship between Jinn and Satan

The Arabic word "shaytan" conveys the adjectival meaning "mischievous." The term has been used in the Qur`an in this very meaning. However, it is also used alternatively for Iblis and for any being

for whom mischief has become a deep-rooted character trait. In fact the Qur`an explicitly states that a "satan" can be from the ranks of jinn or man.

The Limits of Satan's Power

In the dualistic religion of pre-Islamic Iran, Ahriman was thought to be the creator of all evil. Some may think Satan in the Qur`an is the counterpart of Ahriman of ancient Iran. This is a mistaken belief since Satan had no role to play in creation whatsoever. Allah (awj) created everything, and no other being besides Allah (awj) can create independently. In the Qur`an, Allah (awj) derogates such beliefs when he says,

"They make the jinn partners of Allah (awj), when He has created them, and they carve sons and daughters for Him without any knowledge."(1)

Satan has power to incite man with tempting thoughts, to call him toward evil, and to make evil seem beautiful to him. He has no power to force anyone to do anything.

It is true that both angels and jinn have the power to descend upon people. The descent of angels is not limited to the moment of death. For example, if someone says, "Allah" with full attention, angels descend upon him. Jinn also have certain such powers. For instance, they can perform feats with incredible speed. Though their power of intellect is weak, they are able to move heavy objects with great speed. Some verses of the Qur`an indicate that jinn—like humans—are physical beings.

In the story of Sulayman (ع), one jinn claims to be able to bring Bilqis's

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١ - Surat al-An'am (۶), Verse ١٠٠: ﴿ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴾

court quicker than he can stand up. Though he does not (ع) throne to Sulayman's does not repudiate his claim, indicating that (ع) actually perform this feat, Sulayman he did possess such an ability. In other verses, jinn are able to listen to the Qur`an .(being recited (a feat requiring that they have the physical faculty of hearing

Satan's Influence

:Satan launches his assaults on mankind from every direction. As the Qur`an says

I shall approach them head on and from behind and from the right and from the" (left."(١

Satan's exerts his influence on man's thoughts. He launches his assaults from various :fronts, of which we mention a few

He tries to deter man from worshipping Allah (awj) according to the requirements of .١ .revelation by tempting him to act according to his own desires

He influences man's ability to think rationally so that instead of reaching conclusions .٢ .based on solid reasoning, he accepts fallacies that only seem to be rational

He influences man's ability to understand reality as it is. He skews man's . ٣ understanding or convinces him to reject the possibility of understanding such reality. In this way, Satan first corrupts one's perception of reality, then his ability to .comprehend reality, and finally his actions

The Qur`an and ahadith indicate that Satan and his cohorts only have influence over people who have surrendered their devotion to Allah (awj) and who—in a fit of heedlessness—have fallen into a stupor of self-conceit. Of his own admission, he has no influence over Allah's (awj) true

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١- ﴿ ثُمَّ لَآتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ... ﴾ Surat al-A'raf (٧), Verse ١٧:

.servants

(I shall misguide them all except Your sincere servants."(1)"

In philosophical terms, Satan's immateriality is not complete, therefore he cannot reach the lofty station that the spirits of the righteous enjoy. However, this does not .stop him from trying to mislead such people

People have invented a myriad of myths about jinn that do not make logical sense. If however, we strip away the myths, the basic belief in their existence is totally logical. In particular, we have no reason to believe that living beings are limited to those things we can perceive. Rather, the ahadith indicate that imperceptible beings are more in number than perceptible ones: "Allah created the jinn of five types: a type like airborne odours and fragrances, a snake-like type, a type like scorpions, a type like insects of the earth, and a type like mankind who will have to give accounts and will (receive retribution."(2)

As history attests, it is in large part because of the myths that people have created around the jinn that many otherwise rational scholars have come to deny their existence altogether. In reality, each group has lost the truth by going to extremes. Islam affirms the existence of the jinn but rejects the fantastic tales surrounding them. It is for this reason that one chapter of the Qur`an specifically addresses the .topic of the jinn

It is essential to remember that in the Islamic worldview, all that exists—whether they be angels, jinn, or human beings, and whether they are material or

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١- ﴿ :Surat al-Hijr (١۵), Verses ٣٩-۴٠ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ. إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴾

٢- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۶٠, pg. ٢۶٧: خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْجِنَّ خَمْسَةَ أَصْنَافٍ: صِنْفٌ كَالرِّيحِ فِي الْهَوَاءِ، وَصِنْفٌ حَيَّاتٌ، وَصِنْفٌ عَقَارِبٌ، وَصِنْفٌ حَشَرَاتُ الأَرْضِ، وَصِنْفٌ كَبَنِي آدَمَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْحِسَابِ وَالْعِقَابَ.

immaterial—are creations of Allah (awj), and can only act according to Allah's (awj) will. Allah (awj) constantly reminds us in the Qur`an that no cause, whether material or immaterial, can act independently. Life and death, benefit and loss, are all subservient to His power. Therefore, one must always remember Him and trust in Him and seek sanctuary in Him. It is by establishing such a relationship with Allah (awj) ,that one can inoculate himself against all harm. As the Qur`an says

(Nothing can harm them except by Allah's leave."(١)"

We are also warned about human beings and jinn who are evil (literally, who are "satans"), as one author states: "Never incline towards them. Satan is the sworn enemy of Allah and man. He has taken a solemn oath to misguide you. However, his power over you is limited to whispered temptation and he can never negate your free will. The source of evil thoughts is in the human soul itself (al-nafs al-'ammarah). This aspect of the soul is the Achilles' heel of the human being through which Satan acts. ,Allah (awj) has said

We created man and we know the temptations of his soul; we are closer to him than" (his jugular vein.(٢)

,He also said

Indeed as for My servants you do not have any authority over them, except the" (perverse who follow you."(٣)

Question ١٩: Resurrection

point

Question: Please discuss the issue of resurrection in detail both from a rational and a natural or instinctive perspective. Please refer to important books regarding

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١- Surat al-Mujadalah (٥٨), Verse ١٠: ...وَلَيْسَ بِضَارِّهِمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ...

٢- Surat Qaf (٥٠), Verse ١٦: وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ

۳- ﴿ إِنَّ عِبَادِی لَیْسَ لَکَ عَلَیْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلاَّ مَنِ اتَّبَعَکَ مِنَ الْغَاوِینَ ﴾ Surat al-Hijr (۱۵), Verse ۴۲:

.this topic

Brief Answer

The answer to this question will be clarified by examining three philosophical perspectives—that of Masha’ (Peripatetic Philosophy), Ishraq (Illuminationist Philosophy), and Hikmat al-Muta’aliyah (Transcendental Philosophy), as well as the opinions of Kalam (Theology), and ‘Irfan (Mysticism). Among the topics discussed by scholars on this issue include topics such as the possibility of resurrection, its concrete existence, its proof, and the circumstances surrounding the occurrence of resurrection of the body, the soul, or both. Hence the answer will be comprised of the :following

.a. The concept of resurrection

.b. The possibility and actual occurrence of resurrection

.c. Claims and descriptions pertaining to resurrection

.d. Proof of resurrection

:a. Concepts such as

.Returning to one’s original abode .۱

.Death after life and life after death .۲

.Existence of a world similar to this world and the gathering of all mankind .۳

.Return of the soul to its origin and source .۴

.Transfer of the soul from this world to the next .۵

.Gathering of individual souls within the collective the soul .۶

.Resurrection or rising of people from their graves .۷

b. Firstly, the possibility of resurrection and its occurrence must be proven. Its

.possibility can be easily understood from the existence of this world

c. Many scholars and philosophers believe in the resurrection of the body and the soul. However, they disagree on the manner in which the body is resurrected—whether it is the material body of this world, or the imaginal body of the purgatory, or perhaps .the particular intellectual and metaphysical body that returns

d. The

:logical reasons provided in the Qur`an for resurrection are as follows

The afterlife is a requirement for the purposefulness of this world, the .١ establishment of justice, and the perfection of humanity. The same Allah who created mankind in the first place and Who wills seeds to grow in the earth is also very much .capable of resurrecting mankind

Among the logical reasons for resurrection is the existence in every human of a .٢ single unique soul which is not affected by changes in the physical characteristics of the body. Perfection is not achieved during the period the soul is with the body. It is reached when resurrection occurs. The death of the body is a consequence of the soul's attention to the next world and is its homecoming or return to its origin and eternal abode. The idea of creation necessitates that mankind are transposed to a better world. The return of the soul to its origin is a necessity of the concept of resurrection. The soul has greater desire towards its origin than it does to its physical body and its greatest joy is to see the truth. Resurrection is the manifestation of some of the blessed names of Allah such as the Returner, the Enlivener, the Gatherer, the .Cause and etc

Natural Reasons: All of the fundamental principles and secondary precepts of .٣ religion, including resurrection, come naturally to human beings—being innate and inborn to the soul. The desire to be eternal is natural and will be realized through

resurrection. The ultimate desire of mankind is not material pleasure. The fear of death and what's associated to it is a clear indication of the natural desire to be .eternal

Detailed Answer

point

The answer to this question will be clarified by examining three philosophical perspectives—that of Masha' (Peripatetic Philosophy), Ishraq (Illuminationist Philosophy), and Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah (Transcendental Philosophy), as well as the .(opinions of Kalam (Theology), and 'Irfan (Mysticism

Each of these will be discussed in further detail depending on the availability of resources and sometimes quoting from authorities in order to further clarify the topic. It should be noted a perusal of the works of Ibn Sina reveals the fact that he did not offer any logical proof for resurrection. He was of the belief that the only reason to affirm the reality of resurrection was its confirmation by the Prophet—after which he saw no need for a logical proof. However, he did express his opinion on other topics .related to the afterlife

But now, as to the scholars of Kalam, a brief quotation from them will suffice to :illustrate their opinion with regards to the resurrection

Since mankind is composed of a body and a soul, the conditions of his return to the next world can be discussed from both a physical and a spiritual sense. In general, any discussion on resurrection can be divided into two sections: proving resurrection and its necessity, and the manner in which it occurs—whether physical, spiritual, or .both

Philosophers have generally either not given much attention to the

first section or have paid more attention to the manner in which resurrection occurs—concentrating on its physical dimension even though they may accept both physical and spiritual resurrection. This is because physical resurrection has typically been more controversial. In line with this, the subject of resurrection in this question can be :divided into four main topics

a. The Concept of Resurrection

Returning to the original abode .۱

Death after life and life after death .۲

The creation of another world similar to this world and the gathering of all mankind .۳ .from the first to the last

Return of the soul to its origin .۴

Transfer of the soul from this world to the next .۵

(Gathering of individual souls within the collective soul (Allah .۶

Resurrection meaning the rising of the people from their graves in the afterlife .۷ when Allah will judge their deeds and the angels will enter in rows upon rows

One of the conclusions that can be reached from the above points is that the fundamental condition of resurrection is being transferred to the next world. Hence, subjects such as death, survival of the soul, eternal life and etc. are only preliminary .discussions

b. Possibility of Resurrection and its occurrence

It is senseless to discuss any topic unless and until its possibility has been proven. Whether it is proven through the proof of something that is its kind, or through the proof of something that supercedes it. The creation of another world is either like creating this world, or it is even easier. The very existence of this world is indicative of the possibility

of the existence of such a world, and hence the possibility of the existence of a similar world, meaning the next world. Thus we can discuss the occurrence of the next world .and resurrection

c. Claims and descriptions of resurrection and the circumstances of its occurrence

According to Mulla Sadra, many scholars, philosophers and a group of scholars of Kalam believe in both a physical and spiritual resurrection based on the return of the soul to the body.(۱) He also introduces his belief as the return of the same identical body to its soul and believes this to conform to both logic and religion. He believes that disagreeing with this is blasphemy (kufr) and is denying the text of the Noble (Qur`an.(۲

Meeting in resurrection; the body of the dead is returned with its same parts so that if someone sees him, he says that this is the same person that was in the previous (world.(۳

According to the principles of Mulla Sadra, man although one, has three realms and dimensions in which he subsists: sense, imagination, and intellect. Man's existence is initially material and of the order of the natural world, but with its development it becomes spiritual and then goes on to become the intellectual being that is of the next world. All three bodies pertain to the same single individual and are akin to the changes that occur in a person from childhood to old age. What personifies the body is the soul and the soul is one. Therefore, the body of the next world is the same body from this

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۱- Al-Mabda` wa al-Ma'ad, pp. ۴۸۸-۴۸۹

۲- al-Mabda` wa al-Ma'ad, pg. ۴۹۰

۳- Ibid.

.world that has reached perfection

However, according to the scholars of Kalam, the return of the body occurs through the gathering of the physical parts of the body and reintegrating them into one whole. These body parts have unique characteristics due to the fact that they possess one unique soul. As a result, by the will of Allah each body is recreated from its own parts. .After this stage the body rejoins the soul and the same worldly human is recreated

Even though Ibn Sina believed in both a physical and spiritual resurrection, he was unable to provide a logical argument for physical resurrection and obtained his belief from religion; conversely as for spiritual resurrection, he believes it is verifiable .through logic and presents it with logical arguments

Shaykh al-Ishraq does not believe in physical resurrection, namely the resurrection of the body alongwith the soul. Instead, he believes in a body of the world of purgatory (Barzakh) and that the soul returns to its origin because of its love for it—returning .once again from the disarray of the lower world to the world of light

d. Proof of Resurrection

Logical reasons extracted from the Qur`an .۱

a. Allah is the Truth and does not do anything in vain. An aimless world is vain. Thus, a world in motion must have a goal toward which it is moving and in which it will find its .rest; this world of rest is the world of resurrection

b. The All knowing Allah never does anything that contradicts His wisdom and justice and because this world is not able

to provide what is just for a believer and a disbeliever, there must be a day on which .all receive justice for their deeds

c. A concomitant result of the mercy of Allah is that mankind eventually reaches perfection. Hence, there must be a resurrection so that mankind can reap the benefits .of his deeds and reach perfection

d. The Almighty Allah who created mankind in the first instance is most certainly .capable of creating the same humans a second time

e. When a seed is placed in the earth and water and earth surround it, logically it should decompose; instead it opens and splits into a root, which penetrates the ground, and a sprout, which grows out of the ground. This is a sign of the power of Allah and His infinite wisdom, something that is also capable of bringing about the .resurrection

Logical Arguments .۲

a. According to the Mulla Sadra and his Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah: In his Asfar, Mabda' wa Ma'ad, and Shawahid al-Rububiyyah he mentions certain principles which are either altogether or for their most part specific to his own philosophy. He goes on to declare the actuality of physical and spiritual resurrection on the following basis: Although the properties of the body change, the soul remains the same and is what personifies the body. Thus the body and soul of this world are resurrected.(۱)

b. Existence is good and awareness of it is also good. The more complete an existence, the greater the good. Thus the existence of intellect and cognition is

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al-Asfar al-Arba'a, vol. ۹, pp .۱۸۵-۱۹۷ -۱

nobler and its contentment greater. The pleasure obtained from understanding is indescribable. This is because intellection is more intense vis a vis perception, the perceiver and the perceived that sense perception. However, this greater good is not attained when the soul is dependent on the body and it will only be achieved when this restriction is removed.(1)

c. When the soul reaches a level where its dependence on the body is lessened and its attention towards the afterlife is greater, it will separate from the body through a natural death. This separation is not because the body is incapable of keeping the soul but instead due to its natural attraction to the other world. If this were not the case, the body's incapability to keep the soul would have been more evident at the beginning of its creation.(2)

d. Mankind has been created with great intricacy and detail. A high-ranking angel has worked his mould for forty days. It seems very illogical that Allah would be content with his annihilation; instead He wills that mankind leave this low status towards a noble station.(3)

e. Return of the soul to its origin is a necessity of the phrase ma'ad or "return". Return means going back to where one came from.(4)

f. Perspective of Shaykh al-Ishraq: The desire of the soul towards its origin is greater than towards its own body. The more it disassociates from the material, the greater its desire towards the other world. If the body is defeated, at the moment of death,

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۱- Ibid. pp. ۱۲۱-۱۲۳

۲- al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ad, pg. ۵۲۷

۳- Ibid. pp. ۵۲۶-۵۲۷

۴- Ibid. pg. ۵۲۸

the soul returns to its origin. For the soul, there is no greater joy than achieving perfection. If the soul does not achieve this because of being busy with the body and the material, after separating from the body, all the facts will be revealed to it and the blessings of Allah will rain down on him.(۱)

g. Pespective of scholars of Kalam: Religions sent from God have promised rewards and punishments for good and bad deeds. However, Allah's justice is not fully realized in this world alone. Hence, there must be another world, which is deserving of this realization.

h. Gnostic's perspective: Allah is certainly worthy of the manifestation of all His blessed names and qualities. There is an appropriate time and place for each blessed name and quality. The full manifestation of blessed names such as the Returner, the Giver of Life, the Gatherer, etc will occur in the next world.

۳. Natural or innate reasons for Resurrection

a. The source of all fundamentals and branches of religion is from one's nature; otherwise there wouldn't be any coherence between creation and its guidance.

b. The ultimate desire of mankind is not the material world. This is true since by reaching it, the desire does not dissipate. Human nature is focused on achieving perfection. After traveling through the various stages of life, man's attention will be on the afterlife and his potential will reach its limit and he will return to his origin.

c. The desire for everlasting existence is natural; otherwise mankind would never fear death. All the natural

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۱- Hikmah al-Ishraq {Farsi Translation}, pp. ۳۶۷-۳۶۸

desires of mankind are so that he can reach perfection and have wisdom to them. The wisdom in this is the existence of another world, since this world is not deserving of .eternal life

d. The fear of death and what is associated with it has clearly shown itself throughout .history and is a sign of mankind's natural desire for eternal existence

Question ۲۰: Heaven and Hell

point

?Question: Do heaven and hell exist at present or will they be created later

Brief Answer

According to the Qur`an and ahadith, heaven and hell exist at present. However, they will become fully apparent and represented only in the Hereafter at which time each person, according to his actions, beliefs, and ethical behaviour, will be led to his .eternal abode

Nevertheless, prior to the Hereafter, both heaven and hell can reveal themselves either as visions in this temporal world or as manifestations in purgatory (barzakh), serving in both cases as reward or punishment for the one who sees them. There is little difference of opinion among the scholars up to this point. However, there are :other aspects of heaven and hell that require more explanation. In particular

What is the relationship between a person's beliefs, actions, and thoughts and his .۱ ?station in the Hereafter

?What justification is there for the existence of heaven and hell .۲

?What different types of heaven and hell exist .۳

resided and from which they were (ع) In brief, the paradise in which Adam and Eve sent down to Earth; the heaven or hell of one's actions which

envelops a person; and the heaven and hell of purgatory are all simply manifestations of the ultimate, eternal heaven and hell. Additionally, whether a person's eternal abode is heaven or hell depends on his own choices and actions in this world.

Detailed Answer

Belief in heaven and hell as the eternal abode in which a person will remain after the Day of Judgment, and belief in the details of how heaven and hell are created and then perfected, comprise a part of what is known as "belief in the unseen" (al-iman bil ghayb). As such, the only means for attaining knowledge of these things is revelation.

At the same time, until heaven and hell are witnessed first hand in the Hereafter, they do not cease to be part of the unseen world. Therefore all the doubts and questions associated with the unseen apply to the details of heaven and hell as well. However, these doubts and questions are not such that they prevent one from attaining surety of the basic existence of such things.

Among these questions is the question at hand about whether or not heaven and hell exist at present. If they do exist, where are they located? In what state are they? Is heaven simply fallow land that man must cultivate? Is it incompletely built requiring man to complete its construction? Is it complete, and man simply enters it in the Hereafter? Will heaven and hell be created in the Hereafter itself?

To answer these questions, we must first tackle two

:essential issues

What is the relationship between man's actions in this temporal world with his .۱ ?situation in the Hereafter

?What types of heaven and hell exist .۲

Several rationalizations have been offered to explain the relationship between a :person's worldly actions and his punishment or reward in the Hereafter

Punishments and rewards are arbitrarily apportioned in the Hereafter for particular .۱ actions, intentions, and thoughts just as certain forms of capital punishment or monetary penalties are apportioned as retribution in this world. Based on this explanation, the relationship between actions and recompense is arbitrary, not .intrinsic

Retribution in the next world follows the special theory of relativity. In particular, the .۲ energy a person expends in this world for any given action is converted to matter in .the Hereafter, thereby causing him pleasure or pain

Human actions possess an exoteric and esoteric aspect. In this world, most people .۳ can see only the exoteric aspect. However, in purgatory to some extent, and in the Hereafter, to the full extent, the esoteric side of these actions will manifest themselves. It is the manifestation of this esoteric aspect of one's actions that causes .him pain or pleasure in the Hereafter

A person's actions and thoughts issue from the exoteric faculties of his mind and .۴ bodily limbs. In addition, these actions affect his esoteric spirit, though he may be quite unaware of any such effect. In this world, most people perceive the exoteric aspects in themselves and in others. Similarly, in the afterlife, the esoteric aspects will become

apparent for all to see. A person will appear in the form that he gave himself in this world through his good and bad actions. It is this form that causes his pain or .pleasure

The first two opinions do not conform to the verses and ahadith related to this topic. The other two explanations do accord with some of the verses and ahadith, but they .cannot explain all aspects of purgatory and the Hereafter

With respect to the second question about the different kinds of heaven and hell, the :following opinions have been presented

Allah's (awj) threats, warnings, promises, and glad tidings concerning heaven and .۱ hell are simply means of keeping human beings in line. It is not necessary that heaven and hell actually exist. The mere fact that people do good out of their desire for .paradise and refrain from bad out of fear of hell, is in itself a virtual paradise

Paradise is another word for a classless, utopian, Islamic society. Hell on the other .۲ hand is a capitalistic society. Therefore, those seeking heaven should work to .establish the ideal proletarian state, so that they can avoid the hell of capitalism

Paradise is actually a planet in our universe that will be discovered when the .۳ technology of space travel advances sufficiently. We shall then be able to colonize ."paradise" and escape from the "hell" of earth

Heaven is tantamount to the attainment of positive attributes and hell is the .۴ .attainment of evil attributes

,These four explanations are materialist in nature

and are at odds with the Qur`an and ahadith, and contradict the philosophy and rationale behind sending prophets and revealing books. The heaven and hell described in the Qur`an will only appear after death on the Day of Judgment, and are .eternal abodes, not evanescent and fleeting

resided after being created, and from which (ع) The paradise in which Adam and Eve .۱ they subsequently descended to earth, was in reality a part of this temporal, material world. If this were not the case, they would not have been expelled from it, and its .form would have been determined by their prior actions

Manifestations of the esoteric reality of human actions are sometimes witnessed by gnostics even before death, and by pure believers and extreame disbelievers after death, in their graves. Such manifestations will be a source of pleasure or pain for these people prior to Judgment Day. Because these manifestations of heaven and hell are witnessed before Judgment day, they are in reality part of the temporal world. They envelop every person and are perceptible to saints or in the realm of dreams. This view of heaven and hell accords with the third and fourth opinions mentioned .above concerning the interplay between actions and retribution

The Qur`an and ahadith indicate that the heaven and hell of the Hereafter exist at .۲ during his (ص) present. Certain parts of these two realities were shown to the Prophet .(Mi'raj (ascension

Every person has two places reserved for him: one in paradise and one in

hell. If he leaves this world with faith and good deeds, he will occupy his place in heaven. If not, he will be cast into his place in hell. The particularities of his reward or .punishment are determined by his actions in this world

it is said: "Not ,(ع) In an authentic narration from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq a person has been created except that a place has been created for him in paradise and hell. When the righteous enter paradise and the people of hell enter hell, a voice will command the people of paradise to gaze toward hell. They will look therein and .see their own places in hell

It will say, "This is the where you would be if you had sinned against your Lord." At witnessing this, they will become so elated that if it were possible to die in paradise, they would die of happiness for being spared such punishment. Then a voice will command the people of hell to gaze at paradise and see their places therein. It will ".say, "If you had obeyed your Lord, you would have experienced such pleasures

At witnessing this, they will be so distressed, that if it were possible to die in hell, they would die of sadness. Then the places in paradise that had been reserved for the people who are in hell will be given to the inhabitants of heaven, and the places in hell that has been reserved for the people of heaven will

be given to the residents of hell. This is the meaning of the verse in which Allah says of ,the people of heaven

It is they who will be the inheritors, who shall inherit paradise, and will remain therein“ (forever.”(۱) and (۲

In conclusion, the particular heaven or hell that is to be man’s eternal abode exists at present and is perfected by one’s thoughts, beliefs, and actions. However, no one has seen these eternal abodes. That paradise in which (ص) other than the Prophet lived, and the heaven and hell that can be seen before death in (ع) Adam and Eve dreams and visions, and during death and after death in the grave are simply .manifestations of those eternal abodes

Question ۲۱: The infallibility of the Prophets in the Qur’an

point

Question: Explain the infallibility of the prophets. Why is it that some verses of the ?Qur`an contradict their infallibility

Brief Answer

:The answer to these questions can be summarized in the following points

۱. Infallibility is a state of the soul that makes an infallible person shun sins or any unpalatable acts and protects him from mistakes and forgetfulness without negating .his free will

۲. The secret behind the infallibility of the prophets lies in their direct vision and intuition of reality, their perfect faith and certainty, and their deep love for Allah (awj); along with their profound awareness of Allah’s (awj) majesty and the realization of His attributes. In addition, through infallibility, Allah (awj) strengthens the prophets .against the deceptions of Satan and the desires of the carnal soul

۳. Numerous rational proofs confirm

۱ – ﴿ أُولٰئِکَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ الَّذِینَ یَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِیهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴾: Surat al-Mu`minun (۲۳), Verse ۱۰-۱۱

۲ – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۸, pg. ۱۲۵, ۲۸۷: أَبِی عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ خَلْقاً إِلَّا جَعَلَ لَهُ فِی الْجَنَّهِ مَنْزِلاً وَ فِی النَّارِ مَنْزِلاً، فَإِذَا سُکِّنَ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّهِ الْجَنَّهَ وَأَهْلُ النَّارِ النَّارَ نَادی مُنَادٍ: یَا أَهْلَ الْجَنَّهِ أَشْرِفُوا، فَیُشْرِفُونَ عَلی النَّارِ وَتُرْفَعُ لَهُمْ مَنَازِلُهُمْ فِی النَّارِ ثُمَّ یُقَالُ لَهُمْ: هٰذِهِ مَنَازِلُکُمُ الَّتِی لَوْ عَصَیْتُمْ رَبَّکُمْ دَخَلْتُمُوهَا. قَالَ: فَلَوْ أَنَّ أَحَداً مَاتَ فَرِحاً لَمَاتَ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّهِ فِی ذٰلِکَ الْیَوْمِ فَرِحاً لِمَا صُرِفَ عَنْهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ، ثُمَّ یُنَادُونَ: یَا مَعْشَرَ أَهْلِ النَّارِ إِرْفَعُوا رُؤُوسَکُمْ فَانْظُرُوا إِلی مَنَازِلِکُمْ فِی الْجَنَّهِ فَیَرْفَعُونَ رُؤُوسَهُمْ فَیَنْظُرُونَ إِلی مَنَازِلِهِمْ فِی الْجَنَّهِ وَمَا فِیهَا مِنَ النَّعِیمِ، فَیُقَالُ لَهُمْ: هٰذِهِ مَنَازِلُکُمُ الَّتِی لَوْ أَطَعْتُمْ رَبَّکُمْ دَخَلْتُمُوهَا. قَالَ: فَلَوْ أَنَّ أَحَداً مَاتَ حُزْناً لَمَاتَ أَهْلُ النَّارِ ذٰلِکَ الْیَوْمَ حُزْناً، فَیُورِثُ هٰؤُلَاءِ مَنَازِلَ هٰؤُلَاءِ، وَهٰؤُلَاءِ مَنَازِلَ هٰؤُلَاءِ، وَذٰلِکَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: ﴿ أُولٰئِکَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ الَّذِینَ یَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِیهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴾

the necessity of the infallibility of the prophets. The clearest of these proofs is the fact .that Allah's (awj) purpose in creating man can only be fulfilled through their infallibility

If some verses of the Qur`an seem at first glance to contradict these rational .۴ proofs, we must examine those verses more carefully, reflect deeper on their .apparent meaning, and uncover their true meaning

Numerous verses affirm the existence and even the necessity of infallibility, .۵ :although the term "infallibility" has not been used. We cite below some examples

a. Some verses describe a number of the prophets as mukhlasin (those who have been purified). For example, see ۳۸:۴۵-۴۸. In these verses, one who is mukhlas is one .who has not been and cannot be misguided by Satan

b. Numerous verses explain that the prophets have been guided by Allah (awj). For example, see ۶:۸۴-۹۰. It is inconceivable that someone who has been guided by Allah .(awj) could be misguided or make a mistake

c. In many verses Allah (awj) has unconditionally commanded people to obey the prophets. See ۳:۳۱-۳۲ and ۴:۸۰ and ۲۴:۵۲. It is clear that such an unconditional command .from Allah (awj) requires that they be infallible

d. The verses ۷۲:۲۶-۲۸ indicate that Allah (awj) protects his prophets from all .perspectives

e. The Verse of Purification (ayah al-tathir) found in ۳۳:۳۳ clearly indicates the .(ص) infallibility of Prophet Muhammad

Those verses that seem to contradict the prophets' infallibility are either conditional .۱ propositions that do not indicate that they have sinned or they pertain

.to the believers, not the prophets

in whose infallibility many have doubted, the ,(ع) With respect to the prophet Adam .٢ following can be said. First, the proscriptions in the verses related to this discussion are irshadi (advisory) in nature, not mawlawi (a command issued by a superior to an .(inferior with the hopes that the command will be obeyed

Second, even if they were mawlawi imperatives, they do not indicate that a failure to fulfil the commands is tantamount to a sin, but rather that Adam chose a lesser of two .permissible paths

Third, the world in which Adam was living at the time was not a world entailing legal .(responsibility toward Allah (awj

In such a world, disregarding a command cannot be considered a true sin. If we see occasionally that Allah (awj) addresses the prophets with a sharp tone, this is because they are, after all, men with the faculties of anger and lust and the needs of animals. Therefore, they also require constant admonishment and guidance in such a way that .if they were left to themselves for an instant they would be destroyed

Detailed Answer

point

Let us begin answering this question by defining the term infallibility (‘ismah). ’Allamah Tabataba`i defines infallibility as “the presence of a quality in a person that prevents ”.him from committing any impermissible act such as a sin

Al-Fadil al-Miqdad, a ranking Shi’i theologian, presents a more thorough definition, when he says, “Infallibility is a trait bestowed by Allah to a legally accountable (individual (mukallaf

in such a way that the presence of this trait negates in this individual any motive to disobey or commit a sin while he remains capable of doing so. This bestowal is a consequence of the person's acquisition of a moral habit (malakah) of refraining from sin. In addition, this person is aware of the reward earned through obedience and the punishment incurred through disobedience and is apprehensive of forgetfulness and ".failing to perform the better of two praiseworthy acts

It is essential to note that infallibility never compels a person to obey nor prevents him from disobeying. Rather, his faith, knowledge, and perception of Allah's greatness has reached a level where they do not allow him to commit a sin or disobey Allah (awj). According to several ahadith, Allah (awj) strengthens the prophets and Imams through the Pure Spirit, the Spirit of Faith, the Spirit of Strength, the Spirit of Lust, and .the Lofty Spirit

Now that we have defined infallibility, we turn to an analysis of the intellectual and textual proofs for the existence of this trait in certain individuals. As a preliminary note, when examining the verses of the Qur`an concerning the infallibility of the prophets, it is important to keep in mind that Divine revelation can never contradict human reason. Therefore, we must read these verses in light of reason, so that no .contradictions occur

With respect to the infallibility of the prophets, we will mention only one rational proof. Al-Shaykh al-Tusi, in a very terse statement, says, "Infallibility

is necessary for a prophet so that surety in him is attained, and as a result, the purpose of creation is fulfilled." In other words, a prophet must be infallible so that .mankind can trust the revelation that he brings

Some scholars have expressed this proof in the following way: "Once the intellect independently accepts the existence of Allah and the logical possibility of revelation and prophethood (in a general sense, not as pertains to any specific prophet), the intellect then affirms the necessity of the infallibility of the prophets in receiving and conveying divine revelation. The evidence for this is that since Allah has sent his prophets to guide mankind, he must send a person who is neither careless nor forgetful, much less sinful. If not, He will contradict His own purpose in sending prophets, revelation, and in essence, the purpose of creation itself. If the prophets were capable of carelessness, forgetfulness, or sin, people would never fully trust that what they say is from Allah. They would always entertain the possibility that the ".prophets have lied to them or made a mistake or misunderstood Allah's intent

This theological principle is firmly based on the attributes of Allah (awj) himself. In particular it is based on His omniscience ('ilm), omnipotence (qudrah), the purposefulness of His actions (hikmah) — both in creation and legislation — and in essence, on the fact that He is free from impropriety, injustice, and purposelessness. If a prophet were to make a mistake in receiving or conveying

revelation, this mistake would demonstrate either ignorance, weakness, or .incompetence in Allah's (awj) actions

In reality, if the prophet were not infallible, either he would accidentally or intentionally make mistakes in guiding people or, at the very least, his people would not trust him sufficiently, either in terms of his claims to prophethood or in terms of the message and duties that he brings. In the first case, the prophethood would become a cause for the misguidance of people. In the second case, the prophethood would be utterly without purpose. Far be it from Allah (awj) to either misguide or act .without purpose

Until now, we have defined infallibility and presented one intellectual proof for the necessity of this quality in the prophets. We now turn to an examination of the Qur`anic verses that deal with infallibility. We shall discuss these verses in two sections. The first section comprises verses that support the infallibility of the prophets. The second section examines verses that seem to contradict their .infallibility. Finally, we shall present our answer to the initial question

Qur`anic evidence in support of infallibility

Many verses in the Qur`an speak of the quality of infallibility in the prophets, though they do not necessarily use the word 'ismah. We can divide and discuss these verses :in the following manner

Some verses refer to the prophets as mukhlasin (those who are especially chosen). .١ One who is mukhlas cannot be misguided by Satan, and is therefore, infallible. The :following verses serve as an example

And remember our servants: Ibrahim, Ishaq, and"

Ya'qub, men of strength and insight. We purified them through a special trait: the remembrance of the abode of the Hereafter. They are, in our estimation, amongst the elect, the righteous. And remember Isma`il, Ilyas, and Dhu al-Kifl, each of whom was among the righteous."(١)

.In these verses, prophets who were among the mukhlasin are mentioned

,In conjunction with other verses that quote Satan as saying

"By your might, I shall surely pervert them except your chosen (mukhlas) servants among them"(٢)

or

"Without a doubt, I shall misguide them except those who are chosen (mukhlas) from amongst them,"(٣)

it becomes clear that the mukhlasin are those who are out of Satan's reach and are therefore infallible.

٢. Another group of verses mention the presence of "divine guidance" in the prophets. For example:

"We granted Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub and we guided them both. And we had guided Nuh before them. And from his progeny, we guided Dawud, Sulayman, Ayyub, Yusuf, Musa, and Harun. In this way do we reward the righteous. Similarly Zakariyya, Yahya, 'Isa, and Ilyas were all amongst the righteous. We chose men from amongst their fathers, children, and brothers, and guided them to the straight path. This is Allah's guidance ... These are people whom Allah has guided, so follow their guidance (O Muhammad). I do not ask you any remuneration for this message. This message is simply a reminder for all people." (۴)

These verses indicate that the prophets have been guided by Allah (awj). In conjunction with the

١- Surat Sad (٣٨), Verses ٤٥-٤٨: □ وَاذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولِي الأَيْدِي وَالأَبْصَارِ. إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ. وَإِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الأَخْيَارِ. وَاذْكُرْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ وَكُلٌّ مِنَ الأَخْيَارِ □

٢- Surat Sad (٣٨),Verse ٨٢: □ قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ... □

٣- Surat al-Hijr (١٥), Verse ٣٩-٤٠: □ وَلَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ. إِلاَّ عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ □

٤- Surat al-An'am (٦), Verses ٨٤-٩٠: □ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلاًّ هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ. وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ. وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلاًّ فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ. وَمِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ. ذَٰلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ. أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ فَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَٰؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَّلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ. أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهُدَاهُمُ اقْتَدِهِ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرَى لِلْعَالَمِينَ □

,verse where Allah (awj) says

(There can be no one to misguide him whom Allah (awj) guides,"(1)"

it becomes clear that no one can misguide the aforementioned prophets since they have been guided by Allah (awj). And since committing a sin is a form of misguidance, .we can conclude that these prophets are free from sin—that is, they are infallible

The fact that these verses mention these particular prophets as chosen prophets can serve as corroborating evidence for their infallibility. They have, after all been chosen to guide other people, thus they themselves must have already been guided. In to follow the (ص) addition, the last verse quoted above commands Muhammad guidance of these prophets. Clearly, for the final prophet—with his high status—to be commanded to follow his predecessors indicates their infallibility. Otherwise, following .one who is not himself infallible will eventually lead to misguidance

For .(ص) A third group of verses calls on all Muslims to obey the Prophet Muhammad .٣ ,example, one verse says

Say: if you love Allah, then follow me so that Allah should love you and forgive you" your sins. Allah is forgiving, merciful. Say: obey Allah and his messenger. If you turn (away, Allah does not love the disbelievers."(٢

:A verse in Surat al-Nisa` says

(Whoever obeys the Prophet has obeyed Allah."(٣"

Other verses also speak of unconditional obedience of the Prophet and such unconditional obedience necessitates his infallibility, otherwise, the result would be !misguidance rather than guidance

Besides the three groups of verses we have mentioned, there are

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١- Surat al-Zumar (٣٩), Verse ٣٧: وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ

٢ - Surat Ali-'Imran (٣), Verses ٣١-٣٢: ﴿ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْـتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِى يُحْـبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ. قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

٣- Surat al-Nisa' (٤), Verse ٨٠: ﴿ مَنْ يُطِعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ﴾

other individual verses that could be mentioned to support the infallibility of all prophets in general or of the Prophet Muhammad (ص) in particular. One verse says:

"He is the Knower of the unseen. He apprises no one of His secrets except chosen prophets whom He has surrounded with protectors so that He may be assured that they have conveyed their Sustainer's message. He has complete knowledge of what is with them. He has encompassed all things."(١)

Another verse reads,

"Allah wishes only to repel all impurity from you—O people of the Household—and purify you thoroughly."(٢)

It should be noted that Allah's (awj) "wish" in this verse denotes his existential will and not his legislative will. Furthermore, because his existential will cannot be negated (i.e. whatever he wills must necessarily occur), the "people of the household" have necessarily been purified of all defilement—foremost of which is sin. This verse thereby establishes the infallibility of these "people of the household." Who exactly is included in the "people of the household" is outside the parameters of our discussion, but undoubtedly, the Prophet Muhammad (ص) himself is included.

Therefore, the verse explicitly indicates his infallibility. This assertion, in conjunction with the following logical proposition leads us to the conclusion that all prophets are infallible. This proposition says that all scholars are divided between two views concerning the infallibility of the Prophets: either they are all infallible, or they are all fallible. No one claims that some prophets are fallible while others

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١ - Surat al-Jinn (٧٢. Verses ٢٦-٢٨: ◻ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا. إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا. لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ◻

٢- Surat al-Ahzab (٣٣), Verse ٣٣: ◻ ...إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ◻

are not. Therefore, by establishing the infallibility of the final prophet through the .aforementioned verse, we can conclude that all prophets are infallible

Qur`anic verses that seem to contradict the infallibility of the prophets

Once we have logically established the necessity of the prophets' infallibility, if we encounter verses that seem to contradict our reason, we must look more carefully at the verses to understand their true intent. An examination of all such verses would require an entire book, however, in order to answer the question at hand, we shall .examine a sampling of these verses

:One verse reads like this .١

It has been revealed to you (O Muhammad) and to all the prophets that if you ascribe" partners to Allah, all your actions will come to naught and you will be amongst the (losers. Instead, worship Allah alone and be amongst the grateful."(١

From this verse, it appears that associating partners with Allah (awj) is possible even for the prophets. Otherwise, it would make no sense to warn them of such a possibility. The argument against this misinterpretation is that the prophets are free to choose disbelief because, as we stated earlier, infallibility does not negate a .person's free will

However, the prophets will never actually become disbelievers because their deep understanding of Allah (awj) and their direct relationship with Him prevents them .from considering sin, if even for a second

Rather, this verse indicates two meanings. First, it is a conditional statement that indicates that "your actions will come to naught" if the condition of ascribing partners ,to Allah (awj) occurs

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١ - ﴿ :Surat al-Zumar (٣٩), Verse ۶۵-۶۶ وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ. بَلِ اللَّهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾

not that “ascribing partners” is going to occur. Second, the verse indicates the danger of ascribing partners to Allah (awj), and informs us that such a sin will not be tolerated .from even the prophets

In reality this verse clarifies the duty of all people with respect to this sin by making an example of the prophets. Such an analysis of these verses has been narrated from when he says, “Such verses are speaking to all believers, (ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida (۱)”.(ص) although they may be addressed to the Prophet

:Another similar verse reads

The Jews and the Christians will never be satisfied with you until you accept their“ religion. Say: The sole guidance is the guidance that comes from Allah. If you (Muhammad) give in to their whims and desires despite the knowledge that has (reached you, you will have no protector or helper against Allah.”(۲

to give in to the whims and desires of (ص) One might ask, is it possible for the Prophet the Jews and Christians? First of all this verse like the one before it is a conditional statement and therefore does not indicate that vthe condition will occur. Second, as infallibility does not make it impossible for him (ص) we clarified before, the Prophet’s to sin. Rather, it is his understanding, fear of Allah (awj), and faith that makes him shun sin. Third, this statement may be speaking to all believers, although it is .(ص) addressed to the Prophet

A second group of verses .۲

۱- Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. ۴ pg. ۴۹۷: قَالَ الرِّضَا (ع): هٰذَا مِمَّا نَزَلَ بِإِيَّاكَ أَعْنِى وَاسْمَعِى يَا جَارةُ خَاطَبَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَى بِذٰلِكَ نَبِيَّهُ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَأَرَادَ بِهِ أُمَّتَهُ، وَكَذٰلِكَ قَوْلُهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيُحْبِطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِيْنَ وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى.

۲- Surat al-Baqarah (۲), Verse ۱۲۰: ﴿ وَلَنْ تَرْضَى عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلاَ النَّصَارَى حَتَّى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللّٰهِ هُوَ الْهُدَى وَلَئِنْ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِى جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلاَ نَصِيرٍ ﴾

:is represented by the following verse

We have not sent a prophet or a messenger before you except that whenever he“ wished (for something), Satan cast (something) into his wishes. Then Allah nullifies what Satan had cast and then Allah confirms his signs. Allah is All-Knowing, Wise ... (He does this so) that those who have been given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Sustainer, and so they may have faith in it, and that their hearts may be (humbled before Him.”(١)

These verses are among the strongest arguments of those who deny infallibility. In order to cast doubt in the authenticity of the Qur`an, Orientalists have also discussed these verses. They interpret the “casting” of Satan into the wishes of the prophets as a sort of interference in revelation. In this way, they seek to reject the infallibility of the prophets in both the reception and conveyance of revelation. Another interpretation that they present is that Satan whispers to the prophets, thereby .weakening their resolve to guide their people

Certainly these verses mean nothing of the sort. Allah (awj) explicitly negates the existence of such whispers and interference from the prophets. The correct interpretation of these verses is as follows. In every age, when prophets were sent to guide people, Satanic forces from among men and jinn attempted to interfere with the divine mission by corrupting the message in order to misguide people. The Qur`an refers to this phenomenon when it says: “he promises them and gives

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١- Surat al-Hajj (٢٢), Verses ٥٢,٥۴: وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْقَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ... وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ ...

them hope; but Satan promises them nothing but misguidance."(1) In the verses from Surat al-Hajj, Allah (awj) states that He does not sit idle in the face of these satanic .plots, but rather rushes to aid His prophets and deliver them victory

Other verses that require close attention are those that describe the story of the .٣ was deceived and (ع) These verses seem to indicate that Adam (٢).(ع) prophet Adam .misguided by Satan, and is therefore fallible

:We can address these doubts in several ways

First, the negative imperative in these verses (i.e. "do not approach this tree") is irshadi (advisory) in nature, not mawlawi (a command issued by a superior to an inferior with the hopes that the command will be obeyed). In particular, these verses are spoken with the tone of one who is sympathetically advising another because he knows the outcome of his actions. Acting against such an advisory imperative does .infallibility (ع) not contradict Adam's

Second, for argument's sake, if the imperative was of a mawlawi nature, it was not to follow. Rather, it was showing him the better (ع) one that was compulsory for Adam of two permissible paths. When he acted against this imperative, he was not committing a true sin (that deserves punishment), but rather what might be considered a "sin" with respect to his high station. This is what is commonly referred to by the phrase, "the good deeds of the righteous are like sins for those closest to ".Allah

,Third

١- : يَعِدُهُمْ وَيُمَنِّيهِمْ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا Surat al-Nisa` (٤), Verse ١٢٠
٢ - Refer to Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verses ٣٥-٣٧, Surat al-A'raf (٧), Verses ١٩-٢٤, and .Surat Taha (٢٠), Verses ١١٥-١٢٣

that which contradicts infallibility is for a legally accountable person (mukallaf) to was at that time, in a place where no laws (ع) commit a sin. On the other hand, Adam existed. It was only after the fall, when he began his life on Earth, and laws were decreed that legal accountably to Allah (awj) began. Therefore, any failure to follow Allah's (awj) instruction before this time does not contradict his infallibility. Furthermore, the verse also says that the station of prophethood was granted to him after his repentance. Therefore, if someone believes that prophets are only infallible would not contradict his infallibility. (ع) during their prophethood, this action of Adam's However, if one believes that a prophet is infallible from birth (as Shi'i scholars .believe), such an argument would not suffice

Other verses suggest that some of the other prophets committed sins or admitted .۴ to committing mistakes that contradict their infallibility. These verses mention the A .(ع) prophets Nuh, Ibrahim, Yusuf, Musa, Dawud, Sulayman, Ayyub, and Yunus thorough examination of these verses would require an extensive discussion and therefore, we refer the reader to exegeses of the Qur`an that deal with this topic .more extensively

himself, and have been key (ص) Some verses refer to the Prophet Muhammad .۵ ,points of argument for those who deny his infallibility. One such verse reads

We granted you a clear victory that Allah may forgive you your past sins and those to" come and complete his blessing upon you and guide you on

(a straight path."(1)

has committed and will commit (ص) These verses apparently indicate that the Prophet sins, and that Allah (awj) has forgiven him for all of these by means of the Treaty of .Hudaybiyyah

The correct interpretation of these verses is quite different. First, the words dhanb (sin) and ghufran (forgiveness) have been used here to indicate their literal meanings, not the meanings they have come to connote in Islamic nomenclature. In particular, the denotation of dhanb is an unsavoury consequence of an action. Ghufran means to cover or hide. Consequently, the meaning of the verse is: "we have granted you this ".victory in order to hide the consequences of your mission

emigration from Mecca to Medinah), (ص) Before and after the hijrah (the Prophet's the pagans of Mecca held many misconceptions about Islam and the Prophet that were corrected by his subsequent victories. In addition, the initial upheaval that the Islamic mission had caused in the pagan way of life was quickly forgotten because of .the victory he was granted

Since the terms dhanb and ghufran have not been used in their conventional meaning (i.e. sin and forgiveness), this verse in no way contradicts the Prophet's infallibility. Second, even if one insists that these terms have been used in their conventional meanings, the "sins" that are referred to are those actions of his that the pagans of .(Mecca considered sins, not sins against Allah (awj

,Another similar verse reads

May Allah forgive you. Why did you grant them permission"

۱- Surat al-Fath (۴۸), Verses ۱-۲: ﴿ إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَکَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا. لِيَغْفِرَ لَکَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِکَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْکَ وَيَهْدِيَکَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴾

to stay back? (You should not have done so) so that it would become clear to you who (are the truthful, and so that you would know the liars."(1)

had (ص) Some have taken the word 'afa (he forgave) to indicate that the Prophet .committed sins and is therefore fallible

We can answer this attack by saying that the sentence 'afa Allahu 'anka is an indicative sentence that has been used here as a prayer (du'a`) to honor the Prophet just as the statements 'ayyadaka Allahu (may Allah empower you) and rahimaka (ص) Allahu (may Allah have mercy on you) are used. Consequently, these phrases do not infallibility at all. In the words of 'Allamah Tabataba'i, (ص) contradict the Prophet's "Those who misinterpret these verses are in fact playing with the words of Allah and ".do not understand the Qur`an at all. They do not even know the ABC's of the Qur`an

We conclude our discussion of the verses that seem to contradict the infallibility of the prophets hoping that what we have presented is sufficient for the reader to correctly .interpret the remaining verses

It remains to be explained why such verses exist in the Qur`an and why Allah (awj) .addresses his prophets with such a sharp tone at times

Despite the lofty station of the prophets, they are human beings like us. Like all human beings, they are invested with the faculties of lust, anger, and human desires. Therefore, they require constant guidance from Allah (awj). If they are left to

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۱- Surat al-Tawbah (۹), Verse ۴۳: ﴿ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴾

their own devices for even an instant they would be destroyed. For such people who have been vested with the responsibility of the guidance of all mankind, even a momentary lapse in their resolve is therefore considered a tremendous sin. It is for this reason that Allah (awj) sometimes addresses them in a strict tone and it is for this .reason that they are in constant need of prayers and forgiveness

To recapitulate, in the face of conclusive logical proofs, we must forgo the apparent meaning of verses that seem to contradict these proofs. With this methodology, no verses in the Qur`an contradict the infallibility of the prophets. Additionally, there are a myriad of verses that explicitly indicate that the prophets are infallible, of which we .have mentioned a few

Question ۲۲: The Original Sin of Adam and Eve

point

Question: Did Adam commit a sin? What about the question of the infallibility of the ?Divinely sent prophets

In reply to the above question, three issues must be examined. However, it is i.e., the—(ع) necessary to note the fact that the absolute infallibility of the infallibles prophets and the Imams—is the consequence of their luminous and lofty spiritual and existential stations in the order of existence. They are the hidden rays of Divine effusion; the perfect manifestations and the clear signs of the Beauty and Majesty of the Truth. The clay of their bodies and the form of their souls were moulded by both of the Divine arms—i.e., Divine Beauty and Majesty—and so they were taught the reality of the Divine

Names and Attributes in pre-eternity in the world of the Unseen. They have always enjoyed the friendship of God, the Exalted; they see themselves in the perpetual presence of God, and it is precisely this sense of presence that precludes the .committing of sin, although they are still capable of it

there are conflicting ,(ع) As regards the question of the infallibility of the prophets views among Muslim sects. However the main positions can be organized into five :groups

are infallible vis-à-vis the major sins but might commit the minor (ع) The prophets .۱ sins. Moreover, they are bestowed with infallibility at reaching adulthood. This is the .view espoused by the majority of the Mu'tazilites

They are infallible vis-à-vis the deliberate perpetration of sin but are prone to the .۲ inadvertent commission of sin. Moreover, the prophets are bestowed with infallibility .after being appointed to prophethood. This view is held by Abu 'Ali Jiba`i

The prophets are infallible vis-à-vis all sins except those committed inadvertently. .۳ They will, however, be punished for such sins, although the common folk are not liable in such cases. This discrepancy is due to the height of the prophets' spiritual station. .This view is embraced by Nazzam and those who follow his school of thought

Prophets are susceptible to the commission of sin, any type of sin, whether major or .۴ minor, and whether intentional or unintentional. This is the view embraced by .(Hashawiyyah and a number of the traditionalists (ahl al-hadith

Prophets are absolutely infallible in regard to all .۵

types of sin, whether major or minor, and whether intentional or unintentional. This is the view espoused by the Imamiyyah, the Shi'ites. According to the Shi'ite school of thought, the prophets are endowed with infallibility even before they are appointed to prophethood. The only negative deed that they might perform is acting in opposition .to what is encouraged (but not mandatory) or what is more meritorious

The Imamiyyah support their belief by a number of arguments, three of which will be .mentioned here

۱. If they were to commit sins that would indicate their inferiority to the lowest of people, as the knowledge which they possess of the Creator is not available to others. Hence, considering the knowledge which has been bestowed to them regarding Allah (awj) and the reality of sin and disobedience to the command of the Lord—if they .were to sin, they would be the most sordid of sinners

۲. The commission of sin by the prophets would pose a dilemma to the believers. For, as Divine messengers they aught to be obeyed, but as sinners, their obedience would not be permissible. Thus such a scenario would entail the coincidence of obligation .and prohibition, i.e., the concurrence of two opposites, which is impossible

۳. The purpose of the Divine mission of the prophets is to serve as exemplars to be obeyed, to instruct their societies, and to dissuade the believers from sin. If the commission of sin be possible for the prophets that would translate into their people's lack

of trust in them—a trust which is necessary in order to advance their mission, hence defeating the purpose of their mission. And such is unbecoming and thus impossible in .respect to the Wise Lord

derives from their complete (ع) The infallibility of the prophets and the Imams knowledge and direct witness of the unseen realities (which is due to their Divinely inspired theoretical intellects) which prevents them from committing sin (and this aspect can be attributed to their Divinely reinforced practical intellects). In this light it becomes clear that their infallibility is a volitional matter due to their Divine knowledge .of what is permissible and what is not and of vice and virtue

residence prior to his banishment to (ع) The second issue is the location of Adams's earth. Was it the promised Paradise of the Hereafter or a terrestrial heaven? Some are of the opinion that it was the promised Paradise. Although Paradise does not accommodate obligation, but this does not pose a problem in the case of Adam and for the eternal residence in Paradise is the result of acquired eligibility, which ,(ع) Eve .was lacking in their case

But there are several problems with this view. Firstly, if he resided in Paradise which does not accommodate obligation, then why does the Qur`an state that he disobeyed Allah (awj)? And how was Satan capable of disobedience? Secondly, if it were Paradise, then Satan would not have had access to it? Thirdly, the consumption of all the bounties

of Paradise is permissible and Allah (awj) does not prohibit anything there, while Adam .had been prohibited from eating the fruit of the forbidden tree (ع)

Therefore, it seems that the correct view is that he was in a terrestrial paradise. This view is actually substantiated by hadiths which specify that it was a garden in this would even witness the setting of the sun (ع) world, pointing out that Adam and Eve and the moon. There are however contradicting hadiths indicating that the place of their residence was in a heavenly location. This contention is corroborated by the usage of the word hubut in speaking of the banishment, which denotes descending .from a higher level to a lower level

deed: whether they committed a sin (ع) The third issue is in regard to Adam and Eve's or not? There are three positions on this question, two of which are the more important. The first position is that, firstly, it was a minor sin, and secondly, it prophethood, and hence the station of prophethood was not (ع) preceded Adam's violated. Several reasons have been cited in support of this position, among them: the verses that deal with this issue clearly indicate the sinful nature of the deed, for the word 'isyan occurs in them, which in the Qur`an is employed only in the sense of sin. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that the command addressed to Adam prohibiting the consumption of the fruit in question ("la taqraba") was an

repented on (ع) advisory warning. And furthermore, it does not make sense that Adam .account of disregarding an advice

(ع) The other position—which seems to be the correct one of the two—is that Adam was in fact a prophet when committing the deed in question, for Jibra`il would visit him and the visitation of Jibra`il indicates prophethood, for he does not visit anyone all (ع) but prophets. This point is strengthened by the fact that Allah (awj) taught Adam the "names" and it was only he that knew them and not even the angels had that was appointed teacher to the angels, (ع) knowledge. On that account, Adam bestowing to them the knowledge of the "names". All these incidents were prior to was (ع) eating from the forbidden tree. Hence, it can be inferred that Adam (ع) Adam's .in fact a prophet when he committed the deed in question

The problem is that according to the Shi'a school of thought, prophets are absolutely infallible and are even free of minor sins. Thus, the prohibition must be interpreted as guilt was neglecting that which was more (ع) an advisory warning and so Adam's meritorious. But since prophets are at a high station of Divine knowledge, they are guilty even in the case of neglecting what is more meritorious. This is witnessed also when he became angry with his tribe and lost all hope in) (ع) in the stories of Yunus ,(guiding them and so abandoned them without asking permission from Allah (awj

whereat Allah (awj) confined him to the belly of a whale, where if he had not become contrite and repented, he would have remained till the Day of Judgment)(۱) and Yusuf when he sought help from an inmate instead of Allah (awj) for deliverance from) (ع) .(prison

Although it should be noted that neglecting the more meritorious of deeds does not warrant punishment in the case of the ordinary people, for "The righteous deeds of the good folk are the sins of those brought nigh to Him." It is for this reason that the midnight prayer was obligatory for the Prophet while it was an encouraged act for everyone else. It is thus that the laypeople's performance of rituals, which is fraught with distraction and negligence, is inappropriate in the case of the prophets of Allah .((awj

According to this position, 'isyan must be construed as "opposing the word of the Lord". "Word" could either apply to what is obligatory or otherwise something just encouraged. Hence, the claim that the usage of 'isyan in the sense of ignoring that which is encouraged is inaccurate loses ground. Furthermore if in fact 'isyan literally denotes disobeying a command, in this case because of the presence of irrefutable .proofs it must be interpreted accordingly

had (ع) The word ghawa in the verse in question(۲) denotes harm and loss, for if Adam abstained from eating from the forbidden tree, he would have deserved a great reward. And repentance in his case was not for redressing a

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۱- Surat al-Anbiya` (۲۱), Verse ۸۷: { وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنتُ مِنْ الظَّالِمِينَ }

۲- Surat Taha (۲۰), Verse ۱۲۱: { فَأَلْقَاهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَى }

sin, rather for a deed that was unbecoming of his status. This must be complemented by the fact that repentance is not always for rectifying a sin. It is, however, always efficacious in severing the chains of bondage to other than Allah (awj), thus meriting a .great reward, although one might not be sinful

But as regards to why he was not banned from consuming the forbidden tree after banishment or as to whether he regained his original status, first the meaning of the "tree" and its consumption must be understood. There are two possibilities as to the meaning of the "tree": It was either a concrete plant—such as wheat, fig, camphor, etc.—or a spiritual reality. In the latter case, it could not have been the "tree of knowledge" as some have contended, for he was the most knowledgeable creature .after Allah (awj), to the extent that he became the teacher of the angels

Another possibility is that it was the tree of jealousy, which would have to be understood as an inclination toward a positive thing owned by someone else, not the prevalent form of jealousy, for it would be in conflict with the status of prophethood. It has been suggested that his jealousy was in seeing the status of the Prophet of Islam, and realizing his inferiority. This is a more likely (ع) 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn possibility as jealousy is even now a detestable trait condemned by God. It has been stated in a hadith that

.jealousy devours one’s faith even as fire consumes a cotton ball

If however the “tree” refers to a concrete tree, it must be said that it is not wrong for the ruling on a subject to be different in differing times and locations. For instance, in the very early years of Islam, Muslims were directed to pray facing Jerusalem. That .changed later on and they were commanded to pray facing the Ka’bah

Or consider the case of consuming the corpse of an animal not slain according to the prescribed rite, where in normal circumstances it is forbidden while it has been allowed—or depending on the case obligated—in the case of an emergency to save a eating from the ,(ع) starving person from death. To turn back to the story of Adam forbidden tree was prohibited in that particular time and place but permissible at was banished to earth, it was as (ع) other times and locations. Furthermore, if Adam the direct result of eating from that tree, and so that deed was injurious only in the .celestial realm and not on earth

We would like to close this essay by noting that if the dear readers are interested; this .topic can be pursued at a higher level

Brief Answer

In order to arrive at the answer, a few preliminary points must be considered. It must first be pointed out that the Divine prophets and their deputies enjoy lofty spiritual and existential stations in the order of existence. They

are the hidden rays of Divine effusion; the complete manifestations and clear signs of the Beauty and Majesty of the Truth. The clay of their bodies and the forms of their souls were moulded by the might of both of the Divine arms—Beauty and Majesty—and were taught the reality of the Divine Names and Attributes in the pre-eternal world of the Unseen.

The second point that must be addressed is in regard to the question of infallibility. There are a range of views in this regard, among them:

۱. They are infallible vis-à-vis the major sins but are vulnerable to the minor sins;

۲. They are vulnerable to both major and minor sins;

۳. They do not commit sins intentionally but may do so by mistake;

۴. They are absolutely infallible.

The final view, which is the correct one, is that of the Shi'a and is supported by a variety of reasons, one of which is that if they were vulnerable to sin, it would defy the purpose of their mission, for in that case the masses would not be willing to trust and follow them; such a scenario runs contrary to the wisdom of the Omniscient Lord.

Now the cause of their infallibility is their all-encompassing knowledge of obedience and disobedience, of what is permitted and what is forbidden, and generally speaking of vice and virtue (or in a word, their theoretical intellect) that keeps them from sinning (which is carried out by the faculty of the practical intellect).

A relevant

resided before (ع) sin is where Adam (ع) question in the context of Adam's banishment. It could not have been the promised Paradise; for, firstly, as asserted in the Divine Text leaving Paradise is not possible; secondly, Satan is not allowed in Paradise, and finally, there are no restrictions on the consumption of any fruit in .Paradise

(ع) The last point meriting mention in this context is in regard to the nature of Adam's error. One of the posited explanations is that it was not a sin but a neglect of what was more meritorious (tark awla); for, firstly, prophets are infallible; secondly, considering the lofty station of the prophets, it would not be inappropriate for them to be upbraided on account of neglecting what is more meritorious—hence, the adage, "The righteous deeds of the good folk are the sins of those brought nigh to Him;" thirdly, neglecting the more meritorious has in fact occurred among the prophets—as .and so is a likely possibility—(ع) in the story of Yunus

were not forbidden from the (ع) But as to the question of why Adam and Eve consumption of the forbidden fruit on earth as they were in the Garden of Eden, there are several possible explanations. It is possible that the forbidden tree was an actual tree, a plant, the consumption of which entailed banishment from the heavenly life that they were enjoying, and as such there would have been no reason for the prohibition of that tree on earth. And as

elucidated in the appropriate place, religious directives vary based on location, time, .and other particular circumstances

Another possibility is that the tree in question was a spiritual reality. In this case, that tree was either the tree of knowledge, which is of course not defensible as it is contradictory to definitive Qur`anic and traditional principles. For, as related in the was not only not restricted in the acquisition of knowledge but in (ع) Qur`an, Adam .fact he was taught all the "names" thus becoming the teacher of the angels

Another possibility is that the tree is a metaphorical allusion to the trait of envy. Of was a messenger of God, the envy in question should be (ع) course since Adam construed as a sort of longing, possibly a longing for the spiritual station of the Also in this context it may refer .(ع) Prophet of Islam, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn .to the condemnation of jealousy before entering this world

Detailed Answer

Question ۲۳: Purpose of Religion

point

?Question: Did religion come to imprison us or to set us free

Brief Answer

Freedom, from the point of view of religion, can be studied under two headings: spiritual freedom and socio-political freedom. From the spiritual perspective, man's essence or immaterial self is free from corporeality, materiality, and material characteristics. It is nostalgic of its place of origin, the realm of the Dominion and the spiritual world. But due to the attachment of his soul to the body, it is entangled with .worldly and material affairs

Man has no choice but

to pursue his perfection through the means that this world affords, for this world is the cultivation field for the hereafter. However, most people tend to view the world in an independent way and are ignorant of its true value which is found in its relation to the hereafter. Hence they get caught up in frivolities and trivial pleasures and this bars them from ascending to the heights of perfection. Instead of concentrating on the essence and reality of things they are distracted and consider the sensible phenomena as ultimate reality—being utterly oblivious of the malakut (the celestial realm) and spiritual reality of things.

It is in this vein that the seekers of the material world perceive freedom as paramount to enjoying the pleasures of the world without any restraints, whereas true freedom lies in extricating oneself from the snares of lust, and it is this freedom which religion encourages. From the religious point of view, even the mighty king who is constantly expanding his empire might be a slave, a slave to his self, while it is very probable that someone living in utter poverty might have absolute sovereignty.

In conclusion: what the seekers of the material world pursue is the illusion of imaginary freedom, but that which religion encourages is real freedom.

Regarding social and political freedom, Islam neither advocates radical freedom and anarchy, nor does it compel the believer to surrender to all external circumstances and unjust powers, something that would undermine his dignity.

It can be said that

individual and social freedoms do exist in Islam but with a qualification that fundamentally distinguishes them from those that are espoused by the Western worldview. For Islam is Allah-centred, and as such, ordains that man, in his intellectual discernment and application of will, refer only to Allah (awj). In the domain of moral upliftment and cultural progress, Islam exhorts the human community to establish justice and forbids its members from infringing on the rights of each other, while at the same time encouraging them to expand their knowledge and intellectual endeavours with a view to the proper application of knowledge.

Detailed Answer

Our spirit, from the point of view that it is essentially immaterial, is free from matter and body and the properties of bodies. The spirit of man has neither length, breadth, height nor depth, nor qualities such as heat, coldness, the six directions and the other attributes of bodies. The spirit is from the world of "command" ('alam al-amr) and looks towards its own world. The beings of the realm of existence are either in the world of creation and matter or in the world of dominion (malakut), command, and immateriality.

Above the world of bodies that contains temporal and mutable things, there is another world that contains beings that are not subject to change and do not exist in time. This is the world of command that envelopes, comprehends, and rules over and above the world of creation. Both the command and the creation belong to Allah (awj) as

:the Noble Qur`an has indicated

Be aware that the creation and the command belong to Allah, who is High and is the“ (Creator of the World.”(1

The descent of the sprit from the world of command to the world of creation means that the human soul is in a certain sense imprisoned in the lower world (dunya). Yet, it is necessary for man to obtain his acquired perfections by means of this world and it is .because of this that this world is considered the cultivation field for the next world

Looking at this world as if it were independent and by itself keeps man away from spiritual wayfaring and journeying to the next world. It makes him forget about even the possibility of soaring free in the supernatural realms. If man persists in this myopia and grounded behaviour, he begins to think that he will be in this world He who looks at the world“ ,(ع) forever. According to the words of Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib with insight, the world will give him wisdom and he who sews his eyes unto the world, (the world blinds him.”(2

:The life of this world. Allah (awj) has described the life of the world as follows

(Verily, the life of this world is sport and vanity.”(3“

Play or sport is an action whose goal is imaginary. Vain actions are those that that make man forget others. The verse indicates the fact that the life of this world (that is the attachment

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١- Surat al-A'raf (٧), Verse ٥۴: أَلاَ لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَ الأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

٢- Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon ٨٢: وَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ بِهَا بَصَّرَتْهُ وَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ إِلَيْهَا أَعْمَتْهُ

٣- Surat Muhammad (۴٧), Verse ٣۶: إِنَّمَا الْحَيَوةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَ لَهْوٌ

of the soul to the body) busies man with himself to the point where he forgets others. The cause of this is the fact that the world deceives the soul in such a way that it makes him think that he is the body or one with the body. After being deceived in such manner, it is only natural that he becomes disconnected from the other world and forgets all of the greatness and beauty that was in the world of command. In this way, his life passes in sport and vanities. He turns to everything with imaginary and fanciful .goals. When he reaches those illusionary goals, he finds nothing

:Allah (awj) says that

Those who disbelieve, their actions are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty person" believes it to be water. When he reaches it, he does not find anything there except (Allah."(۱)

The person who believes in the primacy of material beings turns all of his attention to sensible things and he is totally unaware of the hidden aspect of things. Such a person wastes his life in eating, drinking and play. According to the words of the Noble Qur`an, they only know the apparent aspect of the world and they are unaware of (the next world.(۲)

But the person who looks at the hidden aspect of things takes their apparent aspect as only a sign for the hidden. He considers the apparent to be a shell for the kernel that is the hidden. In no circumstance will he

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۱- Surat al-Nur (۲۴), Verse ۳۹: ﴿ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ... ﴾

۲- Surat al-Rum (۳۰), Verse ۷: ﴿ يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِنَ الْحَيَاهِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الآخِرَهِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴾

(ع) sacrifice the kernel for the shell. As the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali b. Abi Talib has said, "The friends of Allah are the ones who look at the hidden nature of the world, while the ordinary people look at the apparent; they are concerned with the future while the people are concerned with transient things."(۱)

Those who seek the world surmise that freedom means having all their worldly wishes granted and having unlimited use of riches. They are not aware of the fact that in reality, if we give in to the commands of our carnal soul, we become ever more bound by the shackles of our material body. This is because the carnal soul is that aspect of the human soul that pays more attention to bodily desires and hopes to remain forever in the world.

In reality freedom means to be free from the snares of this world and our lower desires. This is the freedom that religion seeks to achieve. According to religion it is possible for someone to be the king of the world but because he is entrapped by his base desires, he is not free. How many a people exist who live in the most constricting poverty yet remain the masters of their own will. If the power of desire and anger come under the guidance of reason, then not only will they not corrupt the soul, but rather they will grow and become beneficial. True freedom is the dominion of reason over desire(

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۱ - Nahjul Balaghah, Short Saying ۴۳۲: إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الَّذِينَ نَظَرُوا إِلـى بَاطِنِ الـدُّنْيَا إِذَا نَظَرَ النَّاسُ إِلـى ظَاهِرِهَـا، وَاشْتَغَلُوا بِآجِلِهَا إِذَا اشْتَغَلَ النَّاسُ بِعَاجِلِهَا.

.and anger) in the kingdom of the soul

According to religion, slavery is the domination of anger and desire over man. As has said, "How many an intellect is in the captivity of its (ع) Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (desires."(۱)

Again, that great personality has said, "Is there not a free man amongst you who would give this (the world) to its owner?! Know that there is no greater trade for your (soul than heaven. Therefore do not sell your soul for less than that."(۲)

When man becomes free from his base desires, he will be successful in society and his cultural activities. As can be understood from the Noble Qur`an, man faces enemies from the outside and the inside who wish to enslave him. Freedom from these two kinds of enemies constitutes the inner and outer freedoms. Unfortunately some groups like the Sufis have overemphasized inner freedom to such an extent that they have forgotten the outer enemy i.e. the false Gods of gold and embellishment. In opposition to them, some groups have spent all their energies in fighting outer powers, seeking to gain freedom in society. They consider every limitation to be the .cause of man's slavery

There is another group that believes that in order for man to reach perfection, felicity, and freedom, both kinds of freedom are necessary. These two freedoms are .interrelated. Freedom in society is not possible without spiritual freedom

In order for us to make an ideal and humane society it is necessary that

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۱- Ibid., Short Saying ۲۱۱: كَمْ مِنْ عَقْلٍ أَسِيرٍ تَحْتَ هَوَى أَمِيرٍ.

۲- Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ۳۵۸۹: أَلَا حُرٌّ يَدَعُ هذِهِ اللُّمَاظَةَ لِأَهْلِهَا إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ثَمَنٌ إِلَّا الْجَنَّةَ فَلَا تَبِيْعُوْهَا إِلَّا بِهَا.

we don’t go to extremes and obtain both types of freedoms. Therefore, in religious ideology and thought, neither is absolute freedom permissible nor are we compelled to accept all the external conditions of an unjust government. Hence in Islam there is a concept of social freedom, but it is very different from what is meant by the term in .the West

The great prophets came to construct the world but they look at the world in view of the afterlife. In this view, the present world is like a cultivation field for the next world and in which we make our afterlife with our actions. The prophets came in order to teach people how to live in order to be successful in the hereafter. Therefore, the .injunctions of the prophets are for today but only so that we can obtain the hereafter

Religion has its own views regarding economic, political, and social development. It has not relegated this matter to the intellectuals of society. The religion that claims universality and considers all human beings to share in its vision must, by its own logic, hold a comprehensive view about their development. Therefore, understanding .religion is quintessential. Of course, this is very difficult

Religion has three dimensions, one of which lies inside the soul of man. The other two lie outside him. The two that lie outside are the Qur`an and the noble progeny of the The inner dimension of religion is the power of reason and the innate .(ع) Prophet nature of

man; these two are called the “proofs” of religion. Something that reason clearly understands to be true also carries religious authority. Because of this religion is a .combination of reason and tradition

Because the basis of all affairs is Allah (awj), and because it is He who creates all things and the success and loss of man lies in His hands, therefore, all the aspects of man’s life should reflect His orders, whether in economics or any other field. In ethical and cultural matters Islam has invited people to justice and has forbidden people .from trampling on the rights of others

From another point of view, it has encouraged people to learn and teach others and to apply one’s knowledge correctly. There is no good ethical precept except that which religion has invited us to and has made it either obligatory or recommended to .act upon it

The religion of Islam is global. This religion says you can live peacefully with those who do not defy or deny religion. It does not prohibit to live peacefully with those who don’t want to fight you, overthrow religious governments or want to banish you from (your home.(١

Progress’ can be either good or bad. Bad progress is wasteful and lavish living. The‘ Qur`an considers all those things to be bad. It scolds those who waste Allah’s (awj) ,blessings. In regards to those who only think about personal success it says

(Some are they who only think about themselves;(٢“

(they eat as the cattle eat.”(٣“

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١ - ￼ :٨ Surat al-Mumtahanah (۶٠), Verse لاَ يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ￼

٢ - ￼ :١۵۴ Surat Ali-’Imran (٣), Verse وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ ￼

٣ - ￼ :١٢ Surat Muhammad (۴٧), Verse وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الأَنْعَامُ ￼

(Also, the Qur`an has scolded those who hoard gold.(1

(Unfortunately, miserliness has made its home in man's soul."(2"

(Whoever frees himself from the clutches of his own greediness is successful."(3"

Good progress is to work hard and be satisfied with little. From this point of view, if man works hard for his needs and for the needs of society, this effort can be called .kawthar

Question 24: Purpose of Creation

point

Question: What is the purpose of creation? Please state rational proofs in this regards. If the purpose is to perfect ourselves, then why did not Allah (awj) create humanity ?perfect to begin with

Brief Answer

Allah (awj) is an unlimited being who holds all perfections. Creating (bringing to existence) is munificence (jamal) and Allah (awj) is munificent. His munificence necessitates that He grant existence to anything worthy of creation. Thus, Allah (awj) created because He is munificent. In other words, the goal and reason behind creation is Allah's (awj) attribute of munificence. Since, Allah's (awj) attributes of essence are not extraneous to His essence, we can conclude that the goal of creation .is Allah's (awj) essence

Allah (awj) created man with dual inclinations—for good and evil—and with two opposing poles in the external world that correspond to these two, namely the prophets (who represent good) and the devils (who represent evil). In so doing, Allah (awj) enabled man to reach the highest level of perfection possible for creatures, and also allowed him the freedom to fall into the lowest pits of depravity. If man, despite his animalistic

١- ﴿ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلاَ يُنفِقُونَهَا فِى سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيم ﴾ ... Surat al-Tawbah (٩), Verse ٣٤:

٢- ﴿ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الأَنْفُسُ الشُّحَّ ﴾ Surat al-Nisa' (٤), Verse ١٢٨:

٣- ﴿ وَمَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾ ... Surat al-Hashr (٥٩), Verse ٩:

desires and the constant whispering of satanic beings, follows the path of truth, he attains stations above even that of the angels, precisely because the latter do not have such animalistic desires and satanic whispers. However, if he chooses falsehood, he ends up being lower than even the animals, for they lack the spiritual .capabilities and potential of man

Had Allah (awj) given man every perfection that he could possibly achieve at birth, those perfections would not have been volitional ones. Besides, Allah (awj) had already created beings that had all the perfections that they could achieve from the outset and that were without any potential perfections. Thus, the purpose for which man was created is only met if man achieves perfection through his freely chosen .actions

Although the disbelievers and sinners who do not reach perfection certainly do not achieve the true goal of their creation (i.e. acting according to Allah's (awj) decree and wishes) they nonetheless do not go against the existential goal of man's creation. This is because Allah (awj) wanted with His existential will that man be able to choose between truth and falsehood. Had Allah (awj) made it impossible for man to choose falsehood, belief and obedience would not have been volitional and man would not .have free will

Detailed Answer

In order to clarify the answer to this question we must pay attention to the following :points

The aim and end of Allah's (awj) actions: Allah (awj) is not limited by any thing. This is .۱ because He is

the necessary being and His existence does not depend on another. He has, therefore, all perfections.

٢. One of His perfections is the fact that He is the giver of grace and is generous. Allah (awj) has said in the Qur`an,

"The grace of Allah is not withheld."(١)

٣. On Allah's (awj) part, there is nothing that prevents Him from giving. Therefore, if in an instance He does not give, it is because of the limitations of receiver; not the Giver. Everything that can be given, is given. Every good thing, it can be said, is backed by existence while every evil is "backed" by non-existence. For example, knowledge is goodness and perfection while ignorance is evil and imperfection. Also, power, in opposition to incapacity, is perfection and good. When we pay attention to the third preliminary, we can infer that the grace of Allah (awj) comes about by means of His creating. Therefore, the giving-nature necessitates creation.

In other words, if we suppose something deserves to exist but Allah (awj) does not create it, then this is preventing a good from occurring and will be considered niggardliness (given that existence is good). We know, however, that Allah (awj) cannot be miserly. We can conclude from these preliminaries that if one were asked, "Why does Allah create," we can reply that "His being the giver of grace has caused Him to create."

The attributes of Allah (awj) are not external to His Essence. The attributes of Man and other bodies are additional to

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١- Surat al-Isra` (١٧), Verse ٢٠: وَمَا كَانَ عَطَاءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُوراً

their essence. For example the apple has an essence and redness and sweetness are .its external attributes. The apple can be sour or green and still be an apple

The unity of Allah (awj) and His attributes is a extensive theological problem that one can follow further in theology under the discussion on the unity of His attributes. What concerns us here is the fact that Allah's (awj) creativity, which is the purpose of creation, is one with His essence and does not lie outside His essence. Therefore, if we are asked, "Why does Allah create," we will reply that, "because He is Allah." Therefore, the cause for His creating is Himself. This is what our philosophers have said: the goal and the agent in Allah (awj) are one. It is possible to derive this meaning from some of the verses of the Qur`an including

(All affairs return to Him."(١)"

What has been mentioned up to now was the goal of the agent in creation in general. However, the goal of any particular agent, such as man, requires a more specialized objective. This goal is none other than the specific perfection that Allah (awj) intends .from the creation of man

In order to explain, we may say that the fact that Allah (awj) is creative necessitates that He create every perfection possible. Before creating man, He had created other beings called angels. From the start of their creation they possessed all the perfections that were possible for them. Therefore, they will in no way

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١ - Surat Hud (١١), Verse ١٢٣: ... وَ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ ... Also see: Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ٢١٠; Surat Ali-'Imran (٣), Verse ١٠٩; Surat al-Anfal (٨), Verse ٤٤; Surat al-Fahir (٣٥), Verse ۴; Surat al-Hadid (٥٧), Verse ٥

obtain new perfections. Their level of existence will in no way evolve. Allah (awj) relates from the tongue of the angels that

There is none of us except that he has a specific station; it is we who are filled in“ (ranks; it is we who glorify Allah.”(1)

has said, “Then He created the openings between high skies (ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib and filled them with all classes of angels. Some of them are in prostration and do not raise their heads. Others are in a kneeling position and do not stand up. Some of them are in array and do not leave their position. Others are extolling Allah and do not get (tired.”(2)

They worship Allah (awj). This is a perfection that Allah (awj) has given to them. It is ,not possible for them to disobey Allah (awj). Allah (awj) says

The angels do not exceed Him in speech and they act only according to His“ (command.”(3)

,He also says

Upon it were placed mean angels. They do not shrink from acting upon what they“ (were ordered to do."(4)

Because Allah (awj) is creative, He wanted to create a greater perfection, aside from the perfection given to the angels. That is the perfection of man’s free-will. In other words, He wanted to create a being who would obtain all the aforementioned .perfections (that belonged to the angels) with his own freewill

He therefore created man: a being who does not have all the possible perfections from the start of his

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١- Surat al-Saffat (٣٧), Verses ١۶۴-١۶۶: وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَعْلُومٌ. وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّافُّونَ. وَإِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُونَ

٢- Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon ١: ...ثُمَّ فَتَقَ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَوَاتِ الْعُلَا. فَمَلَأَهُنَّ أَطْوَاراً مِنْ مَلَائِكَتِهِ مِنْهُمْ سُجُوْدٌ لَا يَرْكَعُونَ،

وَرُكُوْعٌ لاَ يَنْتَصِبُوْنَ، وَصَافُّونَ لاَ يَتَزَايَلُونَ، وَمُسَبِّحُونَ لاَ يَسْأَمُونَ...

٣- ﴿ :٢٧ Surat al-Anbiya` (٢١), Verse لاَ يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

٤- ﴿ :٦ Surat al-Tahrim (٦٦), Verse ..عَلَيْهَا مَلاَئِكَةٌ غِلاَظٌ شِدَادٌ لاَ يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ﴾

creation. But he is such that he can reach these perfections. It is clear that the perfection that man obtains with his own freewill is loftier than that given to the has said, "Allah has created the angels from the (ع) angels. Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib intellect, He did not place lust in them; and He created the animals with lust, but did .(ع) not place intellect in them. But He placed both intellect and lust in the sons of Adam Therefore, he whose intellect overcomes his lust is greater than the angels. And he (whose lust overcomes his intellect is lower than the animals."(١

Therefore, the purpose behind the creation of man is Allah's (awj) creativity. Allah's (awj) creativity requires Him to create this kind of perfection: The greatest possible .perfection

When we ponder upon the above mentioned points we can conclude that the purpose behind the creation of man will come into existence when man has the capacity to reach perfection and strives to do so with his own freewill. If he had this perfection from the start, it is clear that it would not have come about from his own freewill and .therefore the purpose of his creation would not have been met

We must not forget that for man, obtaining even one minor perfection is accomplished by him exercising his freewill. And hence in doing this he is fulfilling the .purpose of creation

Now if man does not climb even one rung in the ladder of perfection and passes his

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١ - Wasa`il al-Shi'ah, vol. ١١, pg. ١۶۴: قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ (ع): إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَكَّبَ فِي الْمَلَائِكَةِ عَقْلًا بِلَا شَهْوَةٍ، وَرَكَّبَ فِي الْبَهَائِمِ شَهْوَةً بِلَا عَقْلٍ، وَرَكَّبَ فِي بَنِي آدَمَ كِلْتَيْهِمَا، فَمَنْ غَلَبَ عَقْلُهُ شَهْوَتَهُ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَنْ غَلَبَ شَهْوَتُهُ عَقْلَهُ فَهُوَ شَرٌّ مِنَ الْبَهَائِمِ.

whole life in sin and disbelief, though he may not have actualized the special purpose of his creation, he nonetheless has not escaped from the overriding reality that defines the purpose of creation in general. This is because he has actualized something that was a potential for him—for on the opposite pole of his potential to become better than the angels, lay the potential to sink to the lowest of the low. It is Allah (awj) who created him in such a way that he is able to choose either perfection or failure. Therefore, even the disbeliever or sinner does not move contrary to the .(existential will of Allah (awj

Allah (awj) likes and wishes that man ascends the degrees of perfection and does not like him falling into misguidance. In other words, in the creation of man, Allah (awj) has an existential will and a conventional will (or wish). His existential will is that man actualizes all his potentials—whether good or bad. His conventional will or wish is that .man only actualizes his potential for good

With this explanation it can be said that the believing man has actualized both purposes of creation, existential and conventional, and that he has acted according to both the will and wish of Allah (awj). The unbelieving man or sinner on the other hand, although he does not actualize the conventional purpose and is not in agreement with the wish of Allah (awj), is nonetheless in line with the existential goal of creation and never escapes

.the overriding will of the Almighty

Question ۲۵: Signs for the re–emergence of Imam al–Mahdi

point

Question: What are the signs for the re-emergence of the Master of the Age [i.e. the ?[Twelfth Imam

Brief Answer

The topic of the signs of the re-emergence is a complicated one and calls for a thorough investigation of all the related narrations. However, in brief, the signs fall under two categories. One group consists of those signs which will certainly occur, foreshadowing the re-emergence: the rebellion of Sufyani, the rebellion of Yamani, the burst of a heavenly cry, the murder of an innocent soul, the sinking of the army of Sufyani into the desert ground, the rebellion of Dajjal. The remaining signs are not .certain and as such might not occur

:But from another perspective, the signs can be categorized into four groups

۱. The social signs: that is, to put it in a nutshell, those social phenomena whose upshot .would be the downfall of the then perverted human civilization

۲. The religious and Ideological signs: which constitute the collapse and distortion of .the Divine religion

۳. The Natural Signs: changes such as alterations in the constellations.

۴. The individual and miraculous signs: such as the burst of a heavenly cry, and the .murder of the Innocent Soul

Detailed Answer

point

A discussion regarding the signs of the re-emergence is somewhat complicated, for

there are numerous narrations in the corpus of Shi’a ahadith, and add to that the narrations found in the Sunni sources and even the heavenly books of previous religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Indian creeds, and all these call

for a comprehensive investigation and analysis. Furthermore, the related narrations must be weighed as to the authenticity of their lines of transmission and also the .soundness of their content

Based on the Shi’a narrations, it can be inferred that the signs fall under two categories. One group consists of those signs which will undoubtedly occur prior to the re-emergence, without any qualification or prerequisite; namely: the rebellion of Sufyani, the rebellion of Yamani, the burst of a heavenly cry, the murder of the Innocent Soul, the sinking of the army of Sufyani in the desert(١), and the rebellion of Dajjal. The second group consists of signs whose occurrence is contingent on the .materialization of certain conditions. There are many such signs

However, as mentioned before, the signs of the re-emergence can be categorized .into four general groups, which will be explained in brief

a. The Social Factors

To summarize, the appearance of these factors represent the downfall of the then :misguided human civilization. Some of these factors are as follows

١. The prevalence of injustice all over the world, or in other words, the universality and .globalization of injustice

٢. The perversion of rulers. It is imperative to note that what is meant by universal injustice and perversion of rulers is that the political regimes that will govern the world would be founded on social, political, cultural, and economic injustice, and hence the rulers would exercise their power based on a spirit of domination, imperialism, and despotism. It should not be inferred that just individuals or regimes would be

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١- Kitab al-Ghaybah, pg. ٢٥٢

.nonexistent, but that the prevalent system of governance would be that of injustice

.Inflation and economic instability which are the concomitants of an unjust system .۳

The appearance of charlatans and Dajjal-like characters who will claim to be social .۴ reformers. The advent of Dajjal is one of the indisputable signs of the re-emergence to which all previous religions have also alluded. Dajjal literally means one who covers truth with falsehood and deceit. It is likely however, based on the signs mentioned in the narrations, that Dajjal is not a proper name of a single person rather it is a general title for all devious and deceitful individuals and regimes who deceive the masses and bar the path of truth. Some scholars have interpreted Dajjal as being a reference to .contemporary Western civilization

Charlatan and debased individuals will become speakers of their societies.. ۵ .Incompetent individuals will have authority in their societies

Righteous and honest people will be put aside and replaced by dishonest and . ۶ .boastful characters

The rebellion of Sufyani. However, regarding the question of whether Sufyani refers .۷ to a specific individual or is a general title for all deceitful individuals and regimes, there can be no definite answer. But what is clear is that the name signifies an individual or individuals and regimes that are capitalist, predatory, oppressive, backward, and which (or who) propagate superstitions. Their distinctive trait is their willingness to demoralize communities. The narrations prophesy that Sufyani and his army will vanish into the ground in the desert of

Bayda’—an area between Mecca and Medina—and only one person will survive, the (one who will spread the news.(۱)

War, hypocrisy, and bloodshed will take over. In the narrations, it is divined that .۸ [global] war will break out whose instigators will be a people referred to in the ahadith as the Turk, which apparently constitute the ethnic groups who trace their ancestry back to Turk b. Yafith b. Nuh who today inhabit the regions of Mongolia, Punjab, Turkey, Siberia, Afghanistan, India, and in its broad meaning also includes the peoples of the Western hemisphere. The narrations also point to the killing of ۲۳ people, but .this is regarded as being among the unverifiable signs

Revolutions will erupt in an effort to fight global oppression and corruption, some of .۹ which will succeed in organizing new governments. The rebellion and movement of Yamani, which is a symbol of the struggle of truth against deviation at the End of Time, will be one such uprising. The movement of a certain Sayyid Khurasani who will and who will rise to uphold justice is (ع) be of the lineage of Imam Husayn b. ‘Ali another of the factors involved. These two movements—one of which will be in Yemen and the other in Iran—will be among the elements laying the groundwork for The narrations augur that the regime that .(ع) the re-emergence of Imam al-Mahdi will be established in Iran will, firstly, invite the people to Islam and the path of the ,and will (ع) Ahlul Bayt

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Kitab al-Ghaybah, pp. ۲۷۹-۲۸۲ -۱

secondly, clear its territory—which will extend to Kufah—from injustice and .when he re-emerges (ع) corruption and will join forces with and obey the Imam

b. Religious and ideological factors

That is, the collapse and perversion of religion. It has been narrated from the that at the End of Time prayer (ع) Commander of the Believers, Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib will be abandoned; trusts will be dishonoured; lying will be considered permissible; usury will become prevalent; bribery will be all-encompassing; religion will be relinquished in favour of the material life; women’s counsel will be sought; family bonds will be severed; people will become licentious; murder will acquire normalcy; patience will be counted as a weakness; injustice will be prided on; the people of knowledge will be treacherous; the reciters of the Qur`an will be perverse; the mosques will be embellished and the minarets built high [but without the spirituality that is their substance]; promises will be broken; and desires will be ever diverse [and .[conflicting

To put it more generally, the precepts of Islam will be neglected. However, this neglect will be relative; that is, it would be the prevalent mood of human society at the re- (ع) time. This is to such an extent that it has been related that when the Imam emerges he will bring a new way, a new book, and a new religion; meaning that Islam will be so contaminated with superstitions, the Qur`an so assailed with conceptual distortions [i.e. false interpretations] that their reality and inner truth will have been .forgotten

c. Natural factors

Also among

are the natural disasters (ع) the signs heralding the re-emergence of the Imam mentioned in the narrations; such as the [prodigious] lightning of the End of Time; lunar and solar eclipses which will occur outside their natural timeframe; changes in the constellations and the atmospheric conditions (in water, air, sunrise, sunset, etc.). And of course these narrations are capable of being understood in relation to certain events that are taking place in this age, just as Ayatullah Murtada Mutahhari interpreted the "rising of the sun from the west" [which is counted among the signs] as .the rise of Islam at the hands of Imam Khomeini from Paris

d. The individual and miraculous signs

The Burst of a Heavenly Cry - According to the narrations, before or during the .١ event of re-emergence, an angel will cry out from the heaven proclaiming the re-That angel will be the Faithful Jibra`il whose cry will be .(ع) emergence of the Imam heard in all four corners of the globe. Everyone will hear it in his own language without detecting the direction from which the cry originates. But at the same time the Devil will also call out, "'Uthman was murdered while he was innocent" with the intention to (confuse the people.(١

The Murder of an Innocent Soul - The Innocent Soul will be the nickname of a .٢ certain Hashimite youth with a high degree of spiritual perfection. He will fight the Sufyani army and on being defeated will take refuge in Medina. When the Sufyani army reaches Medina, he will

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Kitab al-Ghaybah, pp. ٢٥٣-٢٥۴ -١

flee to Mecca. There he will invite people to the way of the Household of Muhammad but will be slain between the Rukn and the Maqam while innocent of any crime.(۱) (ص) His death will awaken the conscience of the people all over the world, which will in Fifteen days after his death, .(ع) turn prepare them to pledge allegiance to the Imam representative and envoy (ع) the re-emergence will take place.(۲) He is the Imam's .among the people

There are also other signs mentioned in the narrations which we have not included .here

Question ۲۶: Issues such as marriage, place of residence etc etc, concerning the life of the Twelfth Imam

point

Question: Is the Twelfth Imam married and if so does he have children? Where is his place of residence? What does he wear and what does he subsist on? What is the ?sense in praying for his wellbeing

is an enigmatic issue, and therefore questions relating to it (ع) The life of Al-Mahdi might not be answered definitively, although one can arrive at probable answers by .studying the hadiths that have been related in this regard

life is whether he has a family. (ع) One of the questions pertaining to Imam Zaman's :There are three possible answers to this question

;a) that he never married

;b) that he married but has not fathered children

.c) that he does in fact have children

The implication of the first possibility would be his abandonment of a very important religious practice, which is hence very unlikely. Of course, it might be countered that the issue of his occultation and

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۱- Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah, pg. ۳۳۱

۲- Ibid., pg. ۶۴۹

its secrecy are of utmost importance and thus marriage—which although important is not nearly as important—can be abandoned. This contention however is not acceptable, for marriage and the secrecy required during his occultation are in no way .at odds

The second possibility, although free of the problem with which the previous possibility is faced, raises another question: Has he married only once—hence is his wife sharing his unusual longevity—or has he been married to multiple wives? There is no evidence to support either side, but it would not be unlikely if the latter were correct. The problem which this might bring to mind is the possibility that his identity might be revealed. However this might pose a serious problem, for according to the hadiths, in his occultation it is his identity as the twelfth imam from the progeny of Muhammad that must be kept secret, which would not be jeopardized by personal relations if the people whom he is in contact with be unaware of his status as such.(۱)

The same question can be addressed in the case of the third possibility. This possibility however is faced with an additional problem: If the Imam did in fact have children, they would sooner or later decide to search for their true identity which might in turn jeopardize Imam Zaman's (ع) secret mission.

There are however no ahadith that specifically verify any of these three possibilities. As to further accentuate the dilemma, there is a hadith that has been related through two chains of transmitters

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۱ - It is narrated from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq ▯ that "…{he} will go around amongst the people, pass through their shops and markets, and {even} step onto their carpets but they will not know him…" (Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Nu'mani, Kitab al-Ghaybah, p. ۱۶۴.

with one consequential word differing in the two versions. One version related by said, 'No one of his (ع) Shaykh al-Tusi reads, "Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (children (wuldihi) or anyone else would know his whereabouts.'"(1)

In the other version related by Nu'man, the hadith reads, "No one from his friends ((wali) or anyone else would know his whereabouts.'"(2)

Thus due to this discrepancy, there is no reason to prefer Shaykh al-Tusi's version. On the contrary, Nu'man's version seems more preferable in terms of its chain of transmitters and the wording itself. For instance, in Shaykh al-Tusi's version there is a third person singular pronoun (ghayrihi) which seems to be incorrect as its antecedent is plural (wuldihi) which is unjustifiable, except if accounted for according to the :following three possibilities

1. That this mistake is attributable to the scribes;

2. That the hadith is indicating that the Imam only has one son;

3. Or that the hadith is not specifying whether he does in fact have a child or not but that if he did, the secrecy of his mission in occultation is so paramount that even his .child wouldn't know him

Moreover, the chain of transmitters is faulty, which even if this could be overlooked, another issue would be that it is unclear whether the hadith is about the time of .occultation or is referring to the period after his reemergence

There are two other hadiths that complicate the controversy. One is a prayer narrated by Ibn Tawus from

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۱- Kitab al-Ghaybah, pg. ۱۶۲ ...لاَ يَطَّلِعُ عَلى مَوْضِعِهِ أَحَدٌ مِنْ وُلْدِهِ وَ لاَ غَيْرِهِ...

۲- Kitab al-Ghaybah, pg. ۱۷۲ ...لاَ يَطَّلِعُ عَلى مَوْضِعِهِ أَحَدٌ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَ لاَ غَيْرِهِ...

O Allah, grant him [i.e. the Twelfth Imam] in regard to“ :(ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida (himself, his family, his children, and his progeny …”(۱)

It is as“ :(ع) The other hadith is related from Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq though I see the Qa`im [i.e. the Twelfth Imam] in the Mosque of al-Sahlah with his (family accompanying him.”(۲)

has a family (ع) Some have cited the story of the “Green Isle” to claim that the Imam and numerous children who reside on the isle and have it all to themselves. This story however is only a myth. It is more akin to a tail of fiction than to reality. ‘Allamah Majlisi who has narrated this story explains, “Since I did not find this story in any of the reliable books, I have brought it in a separate chapter.”(۳) Shaykh Aqa Buzurg Tehrani (asserts that this tale is a fabrication.(۴)

has a family, it is not verifiable, as (ع) Hence, although it is possible that Imam Zaman there are no authentic hadiths to the point. On the other hand, there does not seem to would abandon the religious practice of (ع) be any good reason why Imam Zaman .marriage

Where does the Imam reside? There are three groups of hadith in this regard that at first glance might seem contradictory. The first group do not specify a location but rather say that the Imam is itinerant in mountains and deserts—such as the hadith narrated by Ibn Mahziar and which Shaykh

p: ۲۰۳

۱- Jamal al-Usbu‘, pg. ۳۱۲: ...وَ أَعْطِهِ فِیْ نَفْسِهِ وَ أَهْلِهِ وَ وُلْدِهِ وَ ذُرِّیَّتِهِ...
۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۲, pg. ۳۱۷: ...کَأَنِّیْ أَرَی نُزُوْلَ الْقَائِمِ فِیْ مَسْجِدِ السَّهْلَهِ بِأَهْلِهِ وَعِیَالِهِ...
۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۲, pg. ۱۵۹
۴- al-²ari‘ah Ila Tasanif al-Shi‘ah, vol. ۵, pg. ۱۰۸

(al-Tusi has recorded in his Ghaybah.(1)

The second group are those that point to a specific location as to where the Imam resides. These hadiths are divergent however in regard to where that location exactly is. Some of these hadiths mention the city of Medina or more specifically Mount Razawi which is located on the outskirts of the city.(2) In reference to such ahadith ,'Allamah Shushtari writes

It has been ascertained in authentic hadiths that the Imam's residence in both the major and minor occultations is Mount Razawi. And the fact that the Kisaniyyah claim it as the headquarters of Muhammad Hanafiyyah does not negate its being where the Imam resides. For, the Kisaniyyah had based their belief on the numerous accounts in had prophesied the coming of the Al-Mahdi, his occultation, (ص) which the Prophet etc., but had erroneously accepted Muhammad Hanafiyyah as the promised Al-Mahdi. And generally, all deviations and aberrations stem from a truth which has been (wrongfully understood or manipulated.(3)

A number of these hadiths however point to an area around Mecca—namely, Zu Tuwa—as the residence of the Imam and where he will begin his revolution alongside (his companions.(4)

The third group of hadiths also lacks any allusion to a specific location but points out that the Imam does in fact interact with other people normally but without being identified.(5) On examining the three groups more carefully it becomes clear that there is no discrepancy between them. The Imam leads a normal life without arising

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۱- al-Ghaybah, pg. ۲۶۶

۲- al-Kafi, vol. ۱, pg. ۳۴۰

۳- The Series of Articles and Saying Regarding the Imam Mahdi, pg. ۶۴

۴- Kitab al-Ghaybah, pg. ۱۸۲

۵- Kitab al-Ghaybah, pg. ۱۶۴ – The translation of this hadith was mentioned in the first .footnote. It indicates that he lives amongst all others except that they don't know him

any suspicion. This mode is the most convenient for the Imam. And this is in no way at odds with him being in Mecca or occasionally retreating to mountains and uninhabited .regions in urgent circumstances

diet comprised of and what type of dress does he wear? As (ع) What is the Imam's mentioned above, the Imam lives a normal life. However the hadiths indicate that he contents himself with the minimum of food and the simplest of clothing. In his Kitab al-and (ع) Ghaybah Nu'mani narrates a hadith from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq which addresses the above question: "He only wears (ع) Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Rida (coarse clothing and eats unpalatable food."(١

In another hadith he is related to have said, "His clothing is rough and coarse, and his (food is bread made from barley."(٢

Brief Answer

The opinion that he has a spouse and children—although possible and not necessarily in conflict with the mission of his prolonged occultation—is not supported by any definitive evidence. It might reasonably be contended that just as Divine decree has dictated that he should remain in the shadows of mystery so too should this question .remain a part of that mystery

As to the location of his residence, there are three groups of ahadith that address this question. The first group do not specify a certain location but—in the case of some of them at least—indicate that he is itinerant, remaining primarily within the mountainous and desert regions. The second group state that he lives

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١- Kitab al-Ghaybah, pg. ٢٣٣: ...فَوَاللهِ مَا لِبَاسُهُ إلاَّ الْغَلِيْظَ وَمَا طَعَامُهُ إلاَّ الْجَشَبَ...

٢- Kitab al-Ghaybah, pg. ٢٣٤: ...وَاللهِ مَا لِبَاسُهُ إلاَّ الْغَلِيْظَ وَمَا طَعَامُهُ إلاَّ الشَّعِيْرَ الْجَشَبَ...

among people but without being recognized. The third group point to specific locations as to where he resides, such as Medina, or Mount Razawi in Medina, or .around Mecca, in the Mountain of Zu Tua

Although the three groups might seem contradictory, they can be reconciled. For, it might very likely be the case that he mainly lives within cities, in Mecca or Medina, but .some times due to urgent circumstances leaves for the mountains and deserts

As to the question of his diet and clothing, it should be borne in mind that he lives an ordinary life, much like other people. On referring to the hadiths it is made clear, however, that he contents himself with the least. In a hadith Imam Husayn b. ‘Ali (ع) explains that his attire is rough and coarse and that his diet consists mainly of bread .produced from barley

As to why we pray for his health, it must be said that the ahadith related from the Imams exhort us to do so, and so we must comply in spite of being unaware of the reason. Nevertheless several possible explanations might be posited, among them :the following

١. Praying for his health is a factor conducive to his wellbeing, and as God knows that there are believers in every age who pray for his wellbeing, it is in this way that He guarantees his health. Of course, this should not imply that if no one prayed for him he would be overcome by disease. This

is similar to God's guarantee that He will secure His religion, although some may .renounce their belief therein

What has been guaranteed on God's part is to safeguard his life until the time of his .۲ mission. Hence, this might not include minor ailments and distresses, which could .possibly be covered by our prayers

Detailed Answer

Prayer for the Health of the Twelfth Imam

(ع) How can one make sense of the common practice of praying for Imam Zaman's ?health when Allah (awj) has guaranteed it

is a religious practice that necessarily has its (ع) Praying for the Imam of the Age particular wisdom, which though beyond our comprehension, nevertheless exists. Just as when our doctor prescribes a medicine for us, whose precise nature and effects we might not know, yet it is not without reason, for he knows what he is doing. At any rate, we are to comply with the exhortations of our religious authorities whom we trust and it is this trust that assures us that there must be some wisdom behind .praying for the Imam's health

There are however certain points that might shed some light on this enigma. Firstly, health is maintained is through the prayers (ع) one of the means by which the Imam's of the believers. This however should not be understood to imply that if we cease to pray, his health would be jeopardized, for there are at all times some believers who pray for his wellbeing. Allah (awj) always has some agents in store to carry out His missions. This is similar

to the scenario of some believers renouncing their faith. In such a case the Divine religion will not perish. Rather Allah (awj) will entrust the religion to another group :who will safeguard it

So if these disbelieve in them, We have certainly entrusted them to a people who will“ (never disbelieve in them.”(١)

That is, if we as guardians of the divine religion—which would indeed be a great honour for us if it were so—abandon our duty, Allah (awj) will replace us with another community that would shoulder the duty faithfully. Or for instance, according to the general rule there is always the camp of evil, but it is one’s own choice to decide to be in that camp—like in the case of Shimr who became so base and evil that he carried .or not— (ع) out the barbarous and unimaginable sin of slaying Imam Husayn b. ‘Ali

The second point to mention in this regard is that it is very likely that the prayers of of minor ailments. For (ع) the believers are efficacious at least in relieving the Imam what has been guaranteed by Allah (awj) is his life, and not his being free of any and all ills and distresses. It is in this way that our prayers could be of help and this is in no .way against Allah (awj)’s will

Question ٢٧: The qualities of human society after the re-appearance of Imam al-Mahdi – the state of Justice, oppression, poverty and sin

point

Question: After the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), how long will it take before the rule of justice [becomes universal]? Will

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١- ﴿ :٨٩ Surat al-An‘am (٦), Verse ...فَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَّلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ ﴾

any poor person or tyrant remain? If no, then does that mean that no sin will ever be committed again? Is it correct that he will be martyred at the hands of a bearded old woman? How does such a crime take place despite the Imam's uprooting of ?oppression

What the narrations yield in this regard is that war will be waged for over a period of eight months, after which time all the various countries will fall under his reign, the rule of justice will be established worldwide, and disbelief, polytheism, and hypocrisy will be entirely uprooted. Hence, no tyrant will remain in power over any society, and the main incentives of sin, particularly social misdeeds, will be eradicated. The earth will yield its treasures of mineral deposits and crops will flourish; the share of the poor will be exacted from the oppressors and the rich and it will be distributed among the poor to such an extent that there will be no need for charity and alms, for all will be .affluent and well off

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

point

is an instance of belief in the unseen (ع) Belief in the reappearance of Imam Zaman realities, those realities which cannot be accepted and whose qualities cannot be apprehended by any other means but faith and through a study of the corpus of authentic narrations. But since most of the ahadith and narrations have through time undergone corrosion as the result of various factors—such as, taqiyyah (dissimulation) on the part of the Shi'ites, fabrication and

distortion of narrations by the enemies of the Shi'ites, neglect of or the lack of attention in recording the narrations on the part of the transmitters, and absence of adequate facilities for publication and preservation of the texts—a detailed understanding of the events prior to and following the reappearance of Imam Zaman (ع), as desired by the truth-seeking Shi'ite, is not feasible.

This becomes especially difficult when faced with some of the contradictions in the related narrations that are not reconcilable. Hence, the reply to the aforementioned question—particularly the first part—is [to a great extent] conjectural. And in order to forward an appropriate response, the question must be broken down into several parts. The answer to each part will be discussed separately.

After the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (ع), how long will it take for him to establish the rule of justice?

To this question, Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (ع) has replied, "For a full eight months, he will have his sword unsheathed and will kill the enemies of Allah until Allah is satisfied."(١)

Based on the narrations that are available to us, he will reappear in Mecca. After the elite of his followers join him there, they will then advance toward 'Iraq, Sham (the present day Syria), and from there toward Jerusalem.

Thereafter the lands of Europe, Turkey, China, Afghanistan, and of other regions will be conquered by him, and so after eight consecutive months of fighting, the rule of justice will be established and peace and security will become prevalent. But about the duration of his rule, there is inconsistency amongst the narrations. Some of the related durations

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١- al-Ghaybah, pp. ١٦۴-١۶۵: ...وَيَضَعُ السَّيْفَ عَلى عَاتِقِهِ ثَمَانِيَهَ أَشْهُرٍ هَرَجاً هَرَجاً حَتَّى رَضِىَ اللَّهُ...

are as follows: ١٩ years and some months; seven years; ۴٠ years; ١٠ years; ٣٠٩ years, each year of which is equivalent to ٢٠ or ۴٠ normal years. And ۴٠ days after his martyrdom or demise [depending on the narration], the earth and the sky will be demolished in preparation for the Day of Judgment.

Will any needy individuals remain after his rule has been established?

After the Imam (ع) rises and establishes the rule of justice, the earth will yield to him her treasures of mineral deposits and crops, the shares that rightfully belong to the destitute and poor will be exacted from the rich and the oppressors to be justly distributed, as the result of which no poor person will remain, to the extent that there will be no use for charities and zakat. Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) says, "The world will be revitalized by the implementation of justice, the sky will send down abundant rain, trees will reveal their fruit, and the earth will deliver her plants, embellishing herself for her inhabitants."

People will be so well-off that it has been narrated that on one occasion Imam Zaman (ع) will order the announcer to inform the people that whoever is in need of financial aid should stand up. From among the entire population only one person will stand up, proclaiming his need. Imam Zaman (ع) will tell him, "Go to the treasurer and tell him that Mahdi commands him to provide you with some money."

At conveying the Imam's message to the treasurer, the latter will tell him,

Bring me your garment." Then the treasurer will fill it full. When the poor man turns" away to leave, he will regret his request, saying to himself, "Why should I be the greediest of the nation of Muhammad?" So he will return it to the treasurer, but it will not be accepted, and Mahdi will tell him, "What we have granted, we will not take ".back

has said, "People (ص) rule, the Prophet (ع) In describing the time of Imam al-Mahdi's will be searching for someone poor who would accept charity or gifts from them, to no avail; they will put aside the zakat of their wealth, but they will not find anyone to give ".it to, for all will be made well-off by Allah grace

establishes his rule, will there be any oppressors remaining in (ع) After Imam al-Mahdi ?power

will be the worldwide (ع) The character trait of the universal rule of Imam al-Mahdi maintenance of peace, security, justice, and the annihilation of the foundations of corruption, decadence, oppression, and crime; just as this has been the main purpose of all the prophets, but with the difference that the success of the latter and their successors following them was not as decisive, but nevertheless, establishing .worldwide peace and security has always constituted one of their promises

And so the unpolluted souls of mankind at large, ever since the beginning of human history, have been waiting for the time when those promises would be realized. Now since Allah (awj), His messengers, and their infallible successors do not breach their promises, they would not raise the hopes

of people without a good reason. This means that this promise will certainly be realized and that a just government will be established, consisting of the .aforementioned characteristics

This promise is so vital and real that its realization can be considered the rationale behind the creation of humankind; a promise that once realized will lead to the unity of the whole of humankind under the banner of tawhid and, by Allah's (awj) mercy, the uprooting of disbelief, polytheism, and hypocrisy(۱) from amongst them. The .narrations that express this are numerous

told his son, (ع) For instance, it has been recorded that Imam Hasan b. 'Ali al-'Askari It is as though I see you when Allah's (awj) support has been sent upon" :(ع) [[Mahdi you, relief (faraj) has been achieved, your magnificence and greatness has risen ... it is at this moment that the rule of truth will dawn and the darkness of evil will vanish from the scene of existence. Through your hands, Allah will break the oppressors' backs, will reinstate the religious sacraments, will enlighten the horizons of the world, and will establish calm and peace throughout the world. Your enemies will be disgraced and your friends esteemed and victorious. Not even a single oppressor, criminal, rebellious denier, encroaching enemy, spiteful opponent will remain on the face of earth, for whoever trusts in Allah, He will provide him sufficient support. Verily, Allah fulfils His wish and executes His definitive promise and will. Verily Allah has set a (plan for everything."(۲

?rule has been established (ع) Will sin be totally annihilated after Imam Zaman's

The

Surat Hud (۱۱), Verses ۱۱۸ ۱۲۳ -۱

قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْراً Surat al-Talaq (۶۵), Verse ۳: -۲

most important motives for the human being's sinning are, on the one hand, his avarice in hoarding material wealth and, on the other hand, his sense of need for the goods of this world. If the human being possesses a sufficient amount of wealth, a good social reputation; if his mentality becomes Divine-permeated, if the world and her goods are belittled in his eyes, and he thus reaches the certainty that all Divine promises are true and as such will certainly be fulfilled, regardless of the aversion of the enemies and their effort to obstruct their realization; if he reaches the certainty that there will be a resurrection, a reckoning, that paradise and what it holds are incomparably superior to the life of this world—in such a case, there will be no motive for sinning. This is especially true based on a few narrations to the effect that at the commencement of the Imam's revolution, Satan will be slain by the Prophet (ص) in Jerusalem, hence putting an end to his tempting and decoying(۱).

Moreover, during that time there will be innumerable obstacles in the way of sinning—such as, the inescapable and universal rule of justice, the healthy and secure environment, and the general rejection of corruption and sin by society. Therefore, there will remain very little motive for sin, and at the same time there will be obstacles in its way, which means that sin will be at its lowest ebb.

There are also numerous narrations in this regard, such

۱- Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. ۲, pg. ۲۴۵: عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) فِی قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَبَارَکَ وَتَعَالَی فَأَنْظِرْنِی إِلَی یَوْمِ یُبْعَثُونَ. قَالَ فَإِنَّکَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِینَ إِلَی یَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ قَالَ یَوْمُ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ یَوْمُ یَذْبَحُهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) الصَّخْرَةَ الَّتِی فِی بَیْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ.

Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) has thus described that era, “Illicit gender relationships, alcoholic beverages, and usury will vanish. People will turn their attention to worship and obedience; they will righteously honour their trusts. The evil people will perish, and the virtuous will remain.”

In another narration, the Prophet (ص) is recorded as having given the following good tidings: “Allah will, through the Mahdi, relieve the hardships of the nation of Islam. He will enamour their [i.e. people’s] hearts with the love of worship and obedience, and will make His justice universal. Allah will, through him, eradicate lies; He will destroy the spirit of violence and animosity, and will free them of the disgrace of bondage.”(١)

Is it true that he will be martyred at the hands of a bearded old woman? How does such a crime take place despite the Imam’s uprooting of oppression?

There are various narrations about Imam Zaman’s (ع) martyrdom or demise; and as this event is due in the future, obviously the only way of unveiling the mysteries surrounding it is by studying the narrations related from the Infallibles in this regard. Nevertheless, the narration pertaining to the event of Imam Zaman (ع) being murdered by an old woman is not accepted as authentic by most scholars. This story has only been recorded in Ilzam al-Nasib and lacks authentic narration. However, if we do accept this narration, it must be noted that what is for certain is that the universal rule under Imam Zaman (ع) will

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١ - al-Ghaybah, pg. ١٨٥, no. ١۴۴: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) (فی حَدِیْثٍ طَوِیْلٍ): فَعِنْدَ ذٰلِکَ خُرُوجُ الْمَهْدِیِّ وَهُوَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ وَلَدِ هٰذَا - وَأَشَارَ بِیَدِهِ إِلـى عَلِیِّ بْنِ أَبِی طَالِبٍ (ع) - بِهِ یَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الْکَذِبَ، وَیُذْهِبُ الزَّمَانَ الْکَلِبَ ، وَبِهِ یُخْرِجُ ذُلَّ الرِّقِّ مِنْ أَعْنَاقِکُمْ. قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): یَمْلَأُ الأَرْضَ قِسْطاً وَعَدْلاً کَمَا مُلِئَتْ ظُلْماً وَجَوْراً، یَمْلَأُ قُلُوبَ عِبَادِهِ عِبَادَةً وَیَسَعُهُمْ عَدْلُهُ.
Tuhaf al-’Uqul, pg.١١۵: عَنْ أَمِیرِ الْمُؤْمِنِینَ (ع): لَوْ قَدْ قَامَ قَائِمُنَا...وَذَهَبَتْ الشَّحْنَاءُ مِنْ قُلُوبِ الْعِبَادِ.

be the rule of justice and equity, and as such the rule of the oppressors will be destroyed. However, this does not necessarily certify that there will be no possibility .of individuals sinning

Question ۲۸: Role of Women in the government of Imam al–Mahdi

point

?(ع) Question: What role will women play in the government of Imam al-Mahdi

Islam incited a revolutionary change in the status of women within the family and in society, in a historically unprecedented manner. In the pre-Islamic period, women throughout the world were viewed solely as a means of satisfying the sexual needs of men and as spineless labourers whose job was to bear children and breastfeed them. They had virtually no human rights to speak of. In the Arabian Peninsula, women were passed hand to hand as inheritance. In exceptional cases, newborn girls were buried .alive beneath the sand

Islam however, views women as the counterpart of men in terms of their humanity. It places the responsibility of the bridal gift (al-mahr) and the provision of her basic necessities on the shoulders of the man. It views the woman as man's partner in life to such an extent that not only is she no longer inherited by men, but rather she herself inherits from men! Like a man, it is possible for her to participate in society in the areas of religion, culture, governance and economics, on condition that she .preserves her humanity and chastity

The quintessential examples from early Islamic history of women who played pivotal (ع) roles in the family and society are Khadijah

and Zaynab b. ,(ص) the wife and daughter of Muhammad ,(ع) `and Fatimah al-Zahra .(ع) the daughter of Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib ,(ع) ‘Ali

like the original appearance of Islam itself, ,(ع) The reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi will instigate revolutionary changes in the world. In particular, his movement will challenge the modern “Age of Ignorance” that has witnessed a revival in the pre-.Islamic values associated with women

As for the particular governmental roles that will be offered to qualified women at that time, little can be said with certainty because our knowledge of the particularities of that time is limited to the Qur`an and sunnah, and little has reached us concerning .this issue

The woman of today has witnessed a regression to a modern “Age of Ignorance.” By way of deceiving platitudes such as “the equality of men and women,” “freedom,” “women’s suffrage,” and “human rights,” the political and economic leaders of the world have turned women into cheap labourers and playthings in the hands of men, thereby stripping them of their very humanity. A woman’s chastity, no matter what .position she holds, is vulnerable to such exploitation

In the wake of this regression, the nuclear family, which is the very backbone of society, is crumbling. It is for these reasons that the world is once again in dire need of to restore humanity to (ص) a movement like the revolution of the Prophet Muhammad .all people—but especially women, and to show mankind the way to true perfection

The Shi’a—from the time of

to heart, (ع) the Prophet himself—have taken the promised appearance of the Mahdi and have been in a constant state of anticipation. His shall be a revolution to overturn .the world. In particular, the regression in the status of women will be reversed

In the pre-Islamic "Age of Ignorance," women were not considered human. It followed that they were offered no rights, and in some cases, their very existence was considered such a source of embarrassment, that newborn girls were buried injected new life into that society. He granted (ص) alive. The Prophet Muhammad women rights and responsibilities that corresponded to the rights and responsibilities of men. The same women, who before the rise of Islam, were property in the hands of man to be gifted at his will and to be bequeathed to his sons, were themselves .granted the right to hold property and to inherit property from men

(ص) Islam raised the station of women to such an extent that the Prophet Muhammad accepted their pledges of allegiance. They were allowed to accompany the Muslim armies to the battlefield as teachers and nurses and moral support for the troops. The Muslim woman could be a teacher and defender of the law, and by fulfilling these roles could rise above the station of the angels. From one perspective the importance of her role exceeds man's role, for she "creates" other human beings and rears them. In the words of Ayatullah Khumayni, "It is because of the upbringing of the mother that

”.a man ascends to his perfection

However, with the passing of time, the status of women in both non-Islamic and .Islamic societies has once again sunk to pre-Islamic levels

revolution will overturn the world order and unify the entire world (ع) Imam al-Mahdi's under the banner of true Islam. The status of women will be no exception from this .new order, for women will be returned to their rightful station

Our knowledge of what is to occur in the age following this revolution is limited to what we can glean from the ahadith concerning what is known as “Mahdawiyyah” (the study of the Mahdi) and historical documentation of the formative years of Islam. In some ways the Islamic Revolution in Iran and its aftershocks throughout the world as well as the pivotal role played by women during and after that revolution, may serve as weak indicators of what the role of women might be during the rule of the Mahdi .(ع)

revolution: (ع) The following ahadith concern the role of women after the Mahdi's The Mahdi will rise“ :(ع) Ja'far al-Ju'afi narrates from Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir up … along with ٣١٣ men and fifty women without any previous arrangement among themselves, like separate clouds clustering in the sky, one after another. This is the meaning of the verse where Allah says, 'Wherever you may be, Allah will gather you together. Allah is capable of all things.'(١) They will pledge their allegiance to the Mahdi between the Black Stone (of the Ka'bah) and

١- ﴿ أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾ :Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ١٤٨

(the Station of Ibrahim, and the Mahdi will rise up with them from Mecca."(1)

Abd Allah bin Bukayr narrates from Humran bin A'yan who narrates from Imam' In the Age of the Mahdi, knowledge will be so" :(ع) Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir pervasive that even a woman in her house will judge according to the Book of Allah (and the sunnah of the Prophet."(2)

The vast majority of narrations concerning the Mahdi mention theological arguments to establish his Imamate, teleological phenomena that will occur before his .appearance, and the new order that will take form during his rule

With respect to many of the details and the division of labour between men and .women, the narrations are silent

Ayatullah Khumayni said, "Islam wants men and women to attain perfection. Islam saved women from the Age of Ignorance. Islam has not served men as much as it has served women. You do not realize what woman was and what she has become." He also said, "Not only does Shi'ism not sideline women in societal matters, it places them in their rightful position as human beings. We approve of the technological advancements of the West. However, we reject the corruption of the West." In another statement he says, "Women hold a pivotal role in societal structure. Islam has lifted women to the extent that they can break free from being a mere commodity and assume their position as human beings. Accordingly, they can assume ".responsibilities within an Islamic government

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

Question ٢٩: The reason for Imam al-Zaman's prolonmgued age

point

Question: Why wasn't

١ - ٢٢٣ .Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٥٢, pg: يَجِى ءُ وَ اللَّهِ ثَلَاثُ مِائَةٍ وَ بِضْعَةَ عَشَرَ رَجُلًا فِيهِمْ خَمْسُونَ امْرَأَةً يَجْتَمِعُونَ بِمَكَّةَ عَلَى غَيْرِ مِيعَادٍ قَزَعاً كَقَزَعِ الْخَرِيفِ يَتْبَعُ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضاً وَ هِىَ الْآيَهُ الَّتِى قَالَ اللَّهُ أَيْنَ ما تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمُ اللَّهُ جَمِيعاً إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلى كُلِّ شَىْ ءٍ قَدِيرٌ فَيَقُولُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ص وَ هِىَ الْقَرْيَهُ الظَّالِمَهُ أَهْلُهَا ثُمَّ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ مَكَّهَ هُوَ وَ مَنْ مَعَهُ الثَّلَاثُمِائَهِ وَ بِضْعَهَ عَشَرَ يُبَايِعُونَهُ بَيْنَ الرُّكْنِ وَ الْمَقَام

٢ - ٣٥٢ .Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٥٢ pg: كَأَنَّنِى بِدِينِكُمْ هَذَا لَا يَزَالُ مُوَلِّياً يَفْحَصُ بِدَمِهِ ثُمَّ لَا يَرُدُّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ مِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ فَيُعْطِيكُمْ فِى السَّنَهِ عَطَاءَيْنِ وَ يَرْزُقُكُمْ فِى الشَّهْرِ رِزْقَيْنِ وَ تُؤْتَوْنَ الْحِكْمَهَ فِى زَمَانِهِ حَتَّى إِنَّ الْمَرْأَهَ لَتَقْضِى فِى بَيْتِهَا بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَ سُنَّهِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص

Imam al-Zaman’s birth postponed to the era of his re-emergence (zuhur)?

The answer to this question is on one hand dependent on clarifying the underlying logic of occultation and the concept of intidhar—awaiting the reemergence of the final Imam. On the other hand, it is also dependent on addressing the question of whether there are advantages to the presence of Imam al-Mahdi (ع) while in occultation. But before delving into the logic and benefits of intidhar, we must point out that the [real underlying] cause of occultation is one of the Divine secrets to which we have no access.(۱) Nevertheless, with recourse to hadith and reason we can decipher some aspects of the occultation. These aspects can be presented in two groups: ۱. those that relate to Imam Mahdi (ع), and ۲. those that pertain to other issues.

The first group are as follows:

a. It has been recorded in the hadith corpus that the Imam went into occultation so that he would not be burdened by anyone’s allegiance.(۲)

b. In some cases, the reason provided for the occultation is safety from the danger of murder.

c. It has been destined that the Imam should transform the world, carry out an all-encompassing reformation, uprooting all civilizations that are founded on power, wealth, and deception, after which he would build a new civilization based on Divine values. Such would not be possible without an abundant amount of knowledge and experience. This is achievable only through witnessing the ups and downs of bygone civilizations. This in

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۲ pg. ۹۱: إِنَّ لِصَاحِبِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ غَيْبَةً لاَ بُدَّ مِنْهَا يَرْتَابُ فِيهَا كُلُّ مُبْطِلٍ فَقُلْتُ لَهُ وَ لِمَ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ قَالَ لِأَمْرٍ لَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لَنَا فِى كَشْفِهِ لَكُم

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۱, pg. ۱۵۲ عَنْ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ : كَأَنِّيْ بِالشِّيْعَهِ عِنْدَ فَقْدِهِمُ الثَّالِثَ مِنْ وُلْدِيْ يَطْلُبُونَ الْمَرْعى فَلاَ يَجِدُوْنَهُ قُلْتُ لَهُ : وَلِمَ ذَلِكَ يَا ابْنَ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ ؟ قَالَ : لأَنَّ إِمَامَهُمْ يَغِيْبُ عَنْهُمْ فَقُلْتُ : وَلِمَ ؟ قَالَ لِئَلَّا يَكُوْنَ فِيْ عُنُقِهِ لأَحَدٍ بَيْعَةً إِذَا قَامَ بِالسَّيْفِ

turn necessitates a prolonged life, hence his occultation.

The second group are as follows:

a. Putting the servant of Allah (awj) to test is among the issues mentioned regarding the logic of occultation. Imam Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kadhim (ع) says, "When the fifth son of the progeny of the Seventh Imam goes into occultation, be aware of your faith. Be cautious that no one should convince you to abandon your faith. O my son, the occultation of the Possessor of Authority (sahib al-amr) is inevitable and consequently some believers will abandon their faith. Allah will test His servants by means of the occultation."(١)

b. The expectation for the faraj (literally "relief", namely the reemergence of the Twelfth Imam) is a factor conducive to self-building. This anticipation is meaningful only in the context of the occultation. Without the occultation, expectation would be meaningless.

Awaiting the rule of Truth is in essence composed of two elements, one negative and one positive: being discontent with the status quo and the hope and desire for a better situation.

If these two elements penetrate into the inner of the human spirit, they bring about two results: the abandonment of any type of cooperation and compromise with the agents of oppression and corruption on the one hand, and the physical and spiritual preparation for the formation of the unifying and universal government on the other hand.

These two elements propel the human being into motion, awareness, and awakening. It is for this reason that awaiting the Relief has been

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١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٥١ pg. ١١٣: إِذَا فُقِدَ الْخَامِسُ مِنْ وُلْدِ السَّابعِ فَاللَّهَ اللَّهَ فِی أَدْيَانِكُمْ لاَ يُزِيلُكُمْ أَحَدٌ عَنْهَا يَا بُنَیَّ إِنَّهُ لاَ بُدَّ لِصَاحِبِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ مِنْ غَيْبَةٍ حَتَّی يَرْجِعَ عَنْ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ مَنْ كَانَ يَقُولُ بِهِ إِنَّمَا هِیَ مِحْنَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ امْتَحَنَ بِهَا خَلْقَه.

considered a form of worship(۱) and those who await the Relief have been described .analogously as those gathered in Imam al-Mahdi's tent, unified under his banner

Looking forward to a revolution in which sinners and oppressors are not involved stimulates the believer to embark on self-building such that he would not be of those .groups

Juxtaposing this reality with the ahadith that explain that in his occultation Imam al-Zaman (ع) constantly supervises the state of his followers (reviewing their performance on a weekly basis(۲)), it becomes apparent that belief in a living Imam wields a much stronger influence on the spiritual training of the believers than belief in an Imam born in some future time and who would be responsible for forming the .universal and unifying government

c. In addition to stimulating personal self-building, awaiting the reemergence of the Imam is also a potent factor in generating social cooperation, for the program that the believers are anticipating is not a personal one, and thus the faithful believer also .endeavours to reform the state of others

d. The faithful believers do not loose hope in the face of the proliferation of corruption, for they view the goal ahead of them and so avoid being implicated in the corruption that surrounds them. Although remaining hopeful and avoiding corruption is also possible if Imam al-Zaman (ع) were to be born in the designated time of the age of his reemergence, nevertheless it is obvious that believing in a living Imam broadens and perpetuates these two

p: ۲۲۳

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۲, pg. ۲۲: أَفْضَلُ أَعْمَالِ شِيعَتِنَا اِنْتِظَارُ الْفَرَجِ.

۲- al-Kafi, vol.۱ pg. ۲۱۹-۲۲۰

.(elements (i.e., remaining hopeful and avoiding corruption

Brief Answer

The answer to this question can be clarified by expounding the underlying philosophy of the occultation and the waiting for his reemergence, as well as by becoming aware of the advantages and blessings that benefit us from his existence even as he is in occultation. On the one hand it is said that among the reasons for his occultation is that he not be burdened by anyone's allegiance, or that he is secure from any attempt to murder him. On the other hand there are other reasons that necessitate his being .alive, i.e., there are benefits and advantages because of his mere existence

The Imam, who is to build a new civilization on the ruins of bygone materialist civilizations, must be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and experience. This is can only be achieved by means of witnessing the ups and downs of many .civilizations and in the due course of the passage of time

is a trial for and a means of testing (ع) Moreover, the occultation of Imam al-Zaman the servants of Allah (awj). Hence, the reasons which call for believers being tested can also support the existence of a living yet hidden Imam, who in this case becomes .a vessel for the arealization of this Divine norm

Closely associated with the term occultation is the term intidhar, "awaiting"the reemergence of the Twelfth Imam. This awaiting is very effective both in personal self-building and also in social cooperation. Although these two effects can also be

achieved without believing in a living yet hidden Imam, the presence of such a belief .strengthens these two effects exponentially

Existence in the Period of Occultation (ع) The Blessings of Imam al-Zaman's

life in the period of occultation has (ع) In the corpus of Shi'a hadith, Imam al-Zaman's been likened to the sun hidden behind clouds. The following are a number of benefits :that emanate from the proverbial sun of his existence

The presence of the leader in the battlefield is a heart warming support for the .١ soldiers' morale. In the same vein, the presence of Imam al-Zaman gives hope to the .believers

The supervision of a living Imam who oversees the conduct of his followers leaves a .٢ peculiar instructive impression on the believers, which is conducive to their spiritual .self-building

the Divine Deputies, (of whom the last one is Imam al- ,(ع) All the Infallible Imams .٣ in every age and time, are treasurers of Divine grace and knowledge. They ((ع) Zaman are the vaults for Divine secrets and the guardians of the proofs of the luminous religion that is Islam, whether they are visible or hidden. They are responsible for the safekeeping of Islam from the shortsighted attempts of some to add unnecessary items or divest it of some of its elements, so as to preserve the timeless Islamic concepts in their original form and to bring the Final Religion—which was finalized and completed with the termination of Revelation—into the body of society. This great Divine task is realized in our

age through the existence of Imam al-Zaman (ع).

۴. There are those who are capable of ascending the clouds, directly enjoying the rays of the sun of Imam al-Mahdi's (ع) existence, thereby gradually purifying themselves in light of this relationship, which would in turn lead to the spiritual improvement of the masses.

۵. We believe that Imam al-Zaman (ع) has Divine authority over the inner beings and the actions of people (al-wilayat al-takwiniyyah). That is, guidance—felicity and wretchedness—is under his command. It is his obligation to guide people to the Destination, which requires that he be alive.

۶. The Universal Man (al-Insan al-Kamil) is the goal of creation; if some day the Universal Man would be absent from the earth, it would collapse. And there is no one else who can claim to be the Universal Man but the Imam.

۷. In order to link the two realms of Essential Unity and Outer Multiplicity, there needs to be a being that has a foot in both realms, i.e., a being that is the combination of Truth and the creation. This being would serve as the vessel for the Divine effusion. This being is no other than the Universal Man—the Divine Proof—who must be present in all ages.

Detailed Answer

The Blessings of the Presence of Imam al-Mahdi (ع) during the Period of Occultation

۱. Inspiriting Hope

The belief in a living Imam who might reappear at any time is similar to the presence of the leader of an army in the battlefield, which is heart warming and animates the troops with the hope of victory.

۲. Stimulating Spiritual Improvement and Self-building

As was mentioned earlier, awareness of the Imam's

monitoring the performance of his followers on a weekly basis can have a (ع) :beneficial influence on the believers. For, the Qur`anic verses (Such as

And say, "Go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the faithful" ([as well]."(١)

and the numerous ahadith(٢) narrated regarding the presentation of the performance of the virtuous and the debauched and sinners on a daily basis, or every Monday, or and the (ص) Thursday—depending on the narration—to the dignified Prophet of Islam clearly demonstrate the necessity of examination of one's conduct (ع) infallible Imams and of self-vigilance. The faithful see themselves in the presence of the honourable Imam and so do not dare to make any mistake lest they should upset his holiness. They struggle ever more vigorously in the way of progress and self-preparation in an .attempt to draw ever closer to him

Safeguarding the Divine Religion .٣

elucidates in an illuminating ,(ع) The Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib saying the necessity of the presence of Divine leaders in all eons and times: "Yes, the earth is never empty of one who stands up with Divine Proof. He might be apparent or hidden. But he must be present lest the Divine signs should perish and be (forgotten."(٣

With the passing of time and the incorporation of personal tastes and thoughts into the original religious tenets, various trends have developed that are inclined toward programs that might appear attractive to the masses but are deviations from the authentic religion, setting the stage for

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١- Surat al-Tawbah (٩), Verse ١٠٥: ﴿ وَقُلِ اعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَ رَسُولُهُ وَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ... ﴾

٢- al-Kafi, vol. ١, pp. ٢١٩-٢٢٠

٣- Al-Kafi, vol. ١, pp. ١٧٨-١٨٠: أَللَّهُمَّ بَلى لاَ تَخْلُوا الأَرْضَ مِنْ قَائِمٍ لِلَّهِ بِحُجَّةٍ إِمَّا ظَاهِراً مَشْهُوراً أَوْخَائِفاً مَغْمُوراً لِئَلاَّ تُبْطِلَ حُجَجُ اللَّه وَ بَيِّنَاتُهُ.

the exploitation of celestial concepts by corrupt opportunists, resulting in the .alteration of a part of the religious tenets. This is very harmful

This Pure Water which has descended from the Heaven of Revelation gradually looses its purity by being channelled through the minds of various people. The shortsighted alterations of fallible individuals might become so tightly intertwined in the original body of religion that they render any attempt to rediscover the original .doctrines very difficult

Considering this reality, should not there be someone to preserve the imperishable doctrines of Islam in their original form for the benefit of future generations? Should ?future generations be expecting the arrival of a new Celestial Revelation

Without doubt the answer is negative. The gate of revelation has been locked by the Seal of the Prophets. Then how should the original religion be preserved? How should this religion be kept unsullied from the impurities of human alterations and superstitions for the benefit of future generations? Is there any other option but that the line of infallible leaders must continue, whether apparent and visible or hidden ?and unnoticed

Training a Task Force .۴

occultation benefits the world like the sun hidden behind (ع) Imam al-Zaman's clouds.(۱) The sun blocked by clouds is still beneficial for existents. One of the presence during the period of occultation is that the (ع) blessings of Imam al-Zaman's elite of the faithful can ascend beyond the clouds, benefiting directly from the rays of the sun of his existence, building themselves through this association and in

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Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۵۲, pg. ۹۲ -۱

.turn training the larger community of the faithful

Spiritual Influence: Existential Training by Means of Existential Guardianship (al–wilayat .۵ (al–takwiniyyah

is a peerless personage whose penetrating rays of existence (ع) Imam al-Zaman influence the hearts of all those ready to receive them, regardless of where they are. It is by this means that the Infallible Imam works to improve the souls of people, has authority in (ع) although they themselves might not be fully aware of it. The Imam .an inward fashion on the performance of people

He is aware of all hidden matters related to the crux and truth of the issue of guidance vis-à-vis the souls and performance of people. The good and bad conduct of humans are unveiled before him. It is he who monitors the paths to felicity and wretchedness. Thus, the station of Imamate is concomitant with the Divine authority of guidance. This guidance is not limited to showing the path, which is the duty of all Divine prophets and even believers. Rather, his is the duty to shepherd the servants of God (toward the Destined Goal.(۱

Purpose of Creation .۶

The world of creation is like a garden. The human beings who are on their way to perfection are its fruitful trees, the deviants its wild and useless weeds. The purpose :of watering this garden would be to quench the fruitful trees, not the weeds

(Indeed my righteous servants shall inherit the earth."(۲"

And if some day all the trees of this garden die and the righteous believers become extinct, there would be no reason to continue watering the garden and the

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al-Mizan, vol. ۱, pp. ۲۷۵-۲۷۶ -۱

أَنَّ الأَرْضَ يَرِثُها عِبادِیَ الصَّالِحُونَ... Surat al-Anbiya` (۲۱), Verse ۱۰۵: -۲

is the Universal Man who is (ع) Divine effusion would cease to be. The Infallible Imam the crown of the party of the righteous and thus the main purpose of creation. It is for this reason that God addresses him so: "If not for you, I would not have created the Spheres [i.e., the universe],"(١) or in another instance it, "If the earth is left without an Imam, it would collapse,"(٢) and also, "It is due to the blessing of his existence that all else is nourished, and it is for his existence that the earth and the heaven remain in place."(٣)

٧. Being the Intermediary in Effusion

In the disciple of gnosis it is explained that the Truth in Its essential manifestations is absolute unity, while in the realm of multiplicity and Divine activity It manifests Itself through particular individuations. However, the former lacks any hue of multiplicity, while the latter lacks any trace of real unity.

Thus, there needs to be a third form of manifestation which could combine the Station of Union with the Station of Separation, serving as the isthmus between the realm of Divine Lordship and the realm of Vassaldom, forming the fusion of Truth and creation; in a word: linking the world of nature and the world of Unity. The Universal Man—the Infallible Imam being the clearest instance—is this link and as such is the intermediary in effusion to the realm of utter multiplicity. Hence he is the manifestation of the lordship of the Truth.

On the basis of this exposition,

١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ١٥, pg. ٢٨: لَوْلَاکَ لَمَا خَلَقْتُ الأَفْلَاکَ.

٢- al-Kafi, vol. ١, pg. ١٧٩: لَوْ بَقِيَتِ الأَرْضُ بِغَيْرِ الإِمَامِ لَسَاخَتْ.

٣- Mafatih al-Jinan, Du'a al-'Adilah: بِيُمْنِهِ رِزْقُ الوَرى وَبِوُجُوْدِهِ ثَبَتُ الأَرْضُ وَالسَّمَاءُ

it becomes clear that the following tradition describing the role of the Infallible Imams is not an overstatement: “It is due to them that Allah nourishes His servants; it is due to them that rain descends from the heaven, and it is due to them that the blessings of the earth surface [to benefit the creatures].”(۱) And it is in allusion to this reality that Imam Muhammad ibne ‘Ali al-Baqir (ع) says, “We are the Beautiful Divine Names.”(۲)

In conclusion, the materialization of the matrix of creation, the effusion of Divine blessings to other-than-Allah, the guidance and training and spiritual perfection of human beings, etc., are all contingent on the existence of a living Imam.

Question ۳۰: Possbility of Decline in Imam al-Mahdis government

point

Question: Historically, we see that every civilization eventually declines. Is it not possible that the government of Imam al-Mahdi (ع) will also decline? In particular, might not people eventually become discontent with his government?

Such a decline in the government of Imam al-Mahdi (ع) is inconceivable.

Governments decline for one of two reasons: either corruption creeps into the system and the government ceases to be just; or forces outside the government act treacherously by turning the people against the government. Since neither cause can exist in Imam al-Mahdi’s (ع) government, it will not decline.

Governments fail for one of two reasons:

۱. The foundations of the government break down due to injustice and deviation from within. This leads either to a revolt of the people against the government’s injustice or to the invasion of foreign

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۲۳ pg. ۱۹: بِهِمْ يَرْزُقُ اللهُ عِبَادَهُ ، وَبِهِمْ يُعَمِّرُ بِلَادَهُ ، وَبِهِمْ يَنْزِلُ الْقَطَرُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ، وَبِهِمْ تَخْرُجُ بَرَكَاتُ الأَرْضِ

۲- Al-Kafi, vol. ۱, no. ۴

powers. Historically, many governments have fallen for this very reason. For instance, in Islamic history, the Sasanian Empire fell in the wake of the Muslim expansion; the Umayyad dynasty fell to the ‘Abbasids; and the ‘Abbasids, in turn, fell to the Mongols.

In each case, injustice had reached such a level that the people felt no sense of loyalty to their rulers that they should defend their government. Rather, they sought succour in the invading forces. Similarly, the Islamic revolution in Iran stemmed from the injustices of the Pahlavi government. In general, all unjust governments eventually fall either because of internal revolt or at the hands of an invader who finds little or no resistance from a people who are disenchanted with their rulers.

۲. The people are deceived and tricked into disenchantment with their ruler. The government of Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) faced just such difficulties. The propaganda with which his political enemies bombarded his people and the wars that he was forced to fight prevented his people from being able to think clearly about the issues at hand.

In addition, in the years leading up to his caliphate, corruption had crept into the upper classes of society to such an extent that the Imam (ع) was reluctant to accept the caliphate since he knew the insurmountable difficulties that such corruption would cause. In particular, he knew that the people, after seeing the decadence of high society, and the discrepancy between Islamic teachings and what was being practiced

by the upper echelons, would not have the resolve to defend his government. The and the (ع) inevitable result of these conditions was the assassination of the Imam .decline of his government

the first factor is inconceivable because like ,(ع) In the government of Imam al-Mahdi government, his government will be absolutely just. For (ع) Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib several reasons the second factor will also not come into play. For one thing, the people will have an increased level of Islamic awareness. Secondly, his government will have control over all forms of media and information technology; hence his enemies will not be able to incite the people against him. Lastly, at that time all aspects of Islamic law will have been put in place. In particular, enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, will be practiced in its full manifestation, so neither corruption will creep into society, nor will the people become disenchanted with the rule of Allah .((awj

It should be kept in mind however, that at that time Satan will be as active as ever. He will be successful in deceiving some; however the vast majority of people will follow .the truth for the aforementioned reasons

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

Question ۳۱: Difference in blood money between man and a woman in Islamic Jurisprudence

point

?Question: Why is the blood money of a woman half of that of a man

All of the laws of Islam are based upon certain benefits. Every law has wisdom. If something has been prohibited in Islam it is because it is harmful. If something has been made obligatory it is because

it has a benefit. Of course perhaps it is not possible for us to find out all of the benefits and harms of all the laws and prohibitions, but if we rely on a sound intelligence and we can (ع) base ourselves on realities and of course on the sayings of the Infallibles .understand some of these things

In regards to the blood money of a woman being half of that of a man there is :definitely some wisdom behind such a law to which we will briefly refer

If Islam was purely a materialistic school of thought and if the foundations of its .۱ laws were monetary and economic matters and, given this, women's blood money was half of that of men's, then this objection would be proper that why is the value of women half of that of men and why have they valued women at half the price of men. But these are not the foundations that are used and in Islam the value of human beings is according to their Spirit and their spiritual qualities. In Islam that which is who spoke with Allah (awj) or be (ع) valuable is piety. Human beings can be like Musa who used to receive heavenly revelations. In regards to traversing the (ع) like Maryam path of felicity and obtaining spiritual positions, men and women are equal. There is no difference between them in this regard in principle, and in fact, the matter depends .upon their personal ambition and effort

But blood money is an economic matter. Blood money is a matter related to the physical aspect of human beings, therefore in this regard there is no difference between the blood money of a prominent member of the Islamic society and an .average labourer

Generally speaking we can say that human beings, whether they be men or women, .۲ :have three dimensions to their existence

a. The human or divine dimension: In this dimension there is no difference between men and women. The path to human and divine perfection is open to both of them and both of them can progress in these regards as far as they want. In verse number :۹۷ of Surat al-Nahl (۱۶), Allah (awj) says

Whoever amongst you whether they be man or woman and they have faith without a" doubt we will give them pure life in this world and in the hereafter we will give them a ".reward in recompense to their good deeds

.In Surat al-Ahzab (۳۳), the same matter has also been alluded to

b. The intellectual dimension: According to the intellectual dimension there is no difference between men and women. Islam does not believe that there is a difference between men and women as regards the gaining of knowledge. "Gaining knowledge is an obligation on both men and women." The Qur`anic verses that have been revealed as regards knowledge and learning have not discriminated between men .and women and these verses are almost ۴۰ in number

c. The economic dimension: In Islam men

and women differ from each other in the economic responsibilities that been placed on each of their shoulders. These responsibilities have been divided according to the bodily and psychological strengths and weaknesses of both. Principally women are .weaker than men in economic matters

Even in this age and in societies that have apparently not discriminated between men and women, the economic output of women is less than that of men. The truth of the matter is that women must become pregnant and after giving birth they must breastfeed their children. They subsequently must take care of their children. The .pregnancy and breastfeeding takes quite a bit of time and energy from the women

Even though this is a valuable matter in itself, it is not an economic matter. There is no economic output produced by such work. From another point of view the body of men and women differ drastically from one another. Women have delicate bodies and they can be injured with the slightest accident while the bodies of men are strong and generally powerful and therefore more suited for difficult tasks. For this very reason, many of the difficult jobs of society that require much power have been placed in the hands of men. It is very obvious that without men the family is more at an economic .loss. It is therefore necessary that men’s blood money be more than that of women

The vacuum felt by a family with the loss of a man is far greater .۳

than the loss felt at the absence of a woman. According to jurisprudential and historical studies, blood money is an economical matter. It has been legislated in order to compensate for the loss incurred by the injured. From another point of view, in an ideal society, which Islam attempts to create, most of the economic activity is .carried out by men

When we look at the general economic responsibilities of men we find that men have duties that women have been excused from. While the most important responsibility of a woman, but not the only one, is to manage the cornerstone of society, in other words the family, the most important duty of man, but not the only one, is to provide for the economic needs of the family. Aside from this, the daily expenses of the children are upon the shoulders of the man not the woman. Therefore with his .departure some people who should be looked after find themselves at a loss

This vacuum must be filled by some means. It is only natural then that the blood money of a man should be more than that of a woman. This matter has no relation to the essence of men and women. Rather it relates to the external accidents that are incurred by a family. When we take into consideration all that has been just said, we can come the conclusion that blood money is not a means by which we value men and women. Their difference in

this matter is not something to be objected to. From another point of view the economic responsibilities of a man necessitate that in some matters (like blood money) that are directly related to economics a certain difference between men and women show up. There is no difficulty in this matter.

Men are stronger than women and are capable of performing more difficult tasks than women. Their existence provides peace and tranquillity to the family. From another point of view, with their loss some people are left without a helper and provider. It is therefore natural that their blood money be more than that of women.

We conclude this answer by turning our attention to a point that is not without subtlety and by answering two questions.

First of all, man's blood money is double that of woman's in the case that the blood money should reach one third of the required portion. In any other case, their blood money is equal. If her blood money's being half were a proof of her inferiority to that of man, then in all cases it should be half. Secondly, just as men have more blood money than women, they are also responsible to participate in the money paid to the family of someone killed or injured by one of their family members. This is while women are excused from such an obligation.

It is possible that someone may object by saying that in this era men and women work side by side in the workforce. Therefore

.there is no reason that in this age her blood money should be half of men's

In answer to this objection we can say that first of all, it is true that women today participate in economic activities alongside men but in no instance can they provide the security that men can provide for their family. Secondly, there are many high paying jobs that do not suit the fragile composition of women and are therefore exclusively for men. It is natural that this would raise the economic status of men over women. At the same time we can object by saying that if the economic output of women were really equal to that of men as some of these countries that are advocates of equality between the sexes claim, then why is it that most of the ?dignitaries and managers and ministers are men

Another objection that is likely to be raised is this: Is the fact that the blood money of women is half of that of men a discrimination against her in favour of men? The answer to this question is that Islam is a religion of equality. To be male or female is no superiority in this religion but in the matter of blood money there is a wisdom that necessitates that men's be more than that of women's. There are laws in Islam that are to the benefit of women based on a certain wisdom that lies in such laws. For ,example if a man becomes an apostate

according to the view of many jurisprudents he is to be killed even though he may repent afterwards. But if a woman becomes an apostate and repents then she is returned to her ordinary life. Or for instance if a man becomes insane after getting married the wife has a right to end the marriage, while if the same thing happens to a woman the man has no such right.

Brief Answer

According to jurisprudential and historical studies, blood money is an economical matter. It has been legislated in order to compensate for the loss incurred by the injured. From another point of view, in an ideal society, which Islam attempts to create, most of the economic activity is carried out by men. When we look at the general economic responsibilities of men we find that men have duties that women have been excused from. While the most important responsibility of a woman, but not the only one, is to manage the cornerstone of society, in other words the family, the most important duty of man, but not the only one, is to provide for the economic needs of the family.

When we pay attention to this matter we can easily conclude that Islam must strengthen those matters that have financial consequences for men and amongst these matters is blood money. Men play a pivotal role in the economic life of the family. From another point of view, blood money is related to the physical aspect of the human being. Hence, if someone's

body were stronger his blood money would be more. Since men are more productive economically than women, their blood money is more than that of women. This does not mean of course that in Islam the position and status of a woman is less than that of a man. If blood money was related to the worth and position of individuals, then the blood money of a scholar or the leader of society would not be equal to that of an .average worker

Another important point pertains to the role a man plays in the security of his household. It is very clear that it is the man that protects the family. This would imply that the loss inflicted on a family if the man was not present would be far greater than if the woman was not there. In the end it is necessary to keep this in mind that in every case the laws that have been presented by a religion or school of thought are always in line with the principles that that religion or school of thought has formed in regards to that matter. It is in accordance to the sum total of those viewpoints that the law been passed. In regards to blood money as well, Islam has formed its law while taking into consideration the responsibilities and rights of both men and women and the general laws that pertain to the family system. We cannot therefore look at .them in a separately and object

Detailed Answer

Question ۳۲: Difference in inheritance of women and men in Islamic Jurisprudence

point

?Question: Why is the inheritance of women half that of men

Before answering this question, it is necessary to remember that the rule that states that the portion of inheritance of a man is twice that of a woman is not true across the board. In some cases we find that men and women take an equal sum of inheritance, like for instance the father and the mother of the deceased who take an equal .amount of inheritance. In this case there is no difference between man and woman

Having said this, it is necessary to address the question of why the share of a ?woman's inheritance is half of that of a man's? Is this not a type of favouritism

was asked as to why women (ع) In a tradition, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq take one portion of inheritance when we see that they are weaker than men and they are more in need of help than them? Why is it that a man, who is stronger than a woman and whose body is more powerful than hers should get a double share of replied that the reason for this is (ع) inheritance? Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq that a man has more responsibilities and he must go to war, enduring many expenses in the process. Aside from his own expenses, a man must also take upon himself the expenses of his spouse and children. What's more, he must give money to the family of a person accidentally

(injured by one of his family members.(١)

emphasized the fact that (ع) In another tradition, Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq it is the man which must give dowry to the woman—this being a recompense to the .(loss incurred by her in her inheritance(٢)

Islam's position on inheritance is in reality to the benefit of the woman. In the Age of Ignorance, the daughters and wives of the deceased were deprived of inheritance and all of the wealth of the deceased went to his sons. Islam, however, came and annulled the laws of the ignorant times and made women amongst the inheritors of the deceased. From its inception, Islam gave women an independence in ownership and monetary matters, this being a matter that has only but recently entered the laws .of European nations

Even though apparently the inheritance of a man is double that of a woman, when we probe into the matter more thoroughly, we find that the inheritance of a woman is two times that of a man. The responsibilities that have been placed on the shoulders of men necessitates that they spend half of their income on women. Any given man is obligated to spend money on his spouse's home, clothes, food, and other expenses, .while the cost of living of himself and his children are on his shoulders

This responsibility of upkeep is to such an extent that even if a woman's social position necessitates her having a servant and she herself does not have the means

١ - al-Kafi, vol. ٧, pg. ٨٥: مَا بَالُ الْمَرْأَهِ الْمِسْكِينَهِ الضَّعِيفَهِ تَأْخُذُ سَهْماً وَاحِداً وَ يَأْخُذُ الرَّجُلُ سَهْمَيْنِ قَالَ فَذَكَرَ بَعْضُ أَصْحَابِنَا لِأَبِی عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فَقَالَ إِنَّ الْمَرْأَهَ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهَا جِهَادٌ وَ لَا نَفَقَهٌ وَ لَا مَعْقُلَهٌ وَ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ عَلَى الرِّجَالِ وَ لِذَلِكَ جَعَلَ لِلْمَرْأَهِ سَهْماً وَاحِداً وَ لِلرَّجُلِ سَهْمَيْنِ.

٢- Ilal al-Shara'i, vol. ٢, pg. ٥٧٠: عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَنَانٍ عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِأَيِّ عِلَّهٍ صَارَ الْمِيرَاثُ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلَ حَظِّ الأُنْثَيينِ؟ قَالَ : لِمَا جَعَلَ لَهَا مِنَ الصِّدَاقِ.

to pay for such a person, the salary of the aforementioned servant is upon her .husband

These responsibilities are on the shoulders of men, whereas we see that women are exempted from paying any living expenses, including their own–whether that be clothes or food. Therefore and in all practicality, it is woman who has more of a .portion of wealth than man

In the commentary of the Qur`an, Tafsir-e-Namunah, an example has been given that is useful in clarifying what we are trying to say. Consider, for example, that the sum total of all the wealth of the world is ۳۰ billion pounds. Say that this wealth was distributed by means of inheritance between men and women. From this amount of money, ۲۰ billion pounds went to men and ۱۰ billion went to women. Since women do not have to spend on themselves, they can save that ۱۰ billion and become partners with the men in the remaining ۲۰ billion (since the portion of men is spent on women and children). So half of the portion of men, which is ۱۰ billion pounds, goes to women. When we add this amount to the portion that the women saved from before, their .sum total becomes ۲۰ billion pounds

By taking into consideration what was just said, we can say that the reasons that :women's portion of inheritance is less than that of men's are three

Dowry: At the time of getting married, man is responsible to take into consideration .۱ a suitable

dowry for the woman. Whenever the woman asks for it, the man is responsible to give it to her. So from the beginning, man is religiously responsible to allot an amount of money as the dowry of his wife. This is one of the reasons that have been alluded to in the sayings of our Noble Imams (ع).

۲. Allowance: In family life, aside from the fact that a man must look after his own expenses, he is responsible to take upon himself the expenses of his wife and children. For amongst the responsibilities of a man is the provision of food, clothes, and shelter for his wife that is in line with her social status. Even if a woman were to have a large amount of wealth, she has no responsibility in this regards. Not only does a woman have no obligation in this regards, but if she wanted to, she could ask of a wage for the work she does at home such as breastfeeding her children, cooking, etc.

۳. Special responsibilities of man: Some very heavy responsibilities have been placed on men's shoulders; responsibilities that women have been excused from. A good example is warfare in the path of Allah (awj). A man must wage war with his life and his wealth. In some of the verses of the Noble Qur`an war by means of wealth has even been placed ahead of war by means of life. A man must spend from his own pocket the expenses of

his going to war. Or when someone is killed by another person, the men of the family of the culprit must pay money to the victim's family, but women are freed form such .an expense

As can be seen, Islam did not intend to pass laws for the benefit of man and to the detriment of woman, or vice versa. Islam is not an advocate of "woman's rights," or that of men's. More than anything, when passing laws Islam, has taken into consideration the eternal felicity of men, women, their children, and society as a .whole

In any case, in line with the monetary responsibilities that it has relegated for men, Islam has in many instances divided wealth between men and women—such an instance being inheritance. It is not possible for us to claim that there is discrimination in this regards. Also, the whole corpus of the laws of Islam regarding men and women necessitate that the laws of inheritance be a certain way. This matter does not allow .us to object to the civil laws of Islam

In the end, it is possible for us to say that if it is true that the expenses of the woman are upon the shoulders of the man, then what use does woman have in hoarding a large amount of wealth? We can answer by saying that the dowry and inheritance of the woman is like a savings that is for her future, in case she separates from her spouse or her spouse

dies. It is so she can lead a comfortable and respected life in case such events happen. But the reason that the expenses of the woman is upon the man is so that she can, without any sort of mental anxiety, raise good and pious children. In this way .the family, which is the cornerstone of society, will be filled with warmth and love

In the end we would like to point our reader's attention to the following: If it should arise that circumstances necessitate that the owner of the wealth should help out the wife or the daughters more than his sons, then this person can do this by following the procedures laid out in Islamic Jurisprudence. For example, if the father thinks it prudent to help his daughter more, he can, in his lifetime, give as a gift, some of his wealth to her. Also he can give a larger portion than her share of inheritance by .writing a specific will in this regard

Brief Answer

The fact that a woman's inheritance is half that of a man's has enticed many to delve into the rationale behind this rule. In the answers that have reached us from the leaders of religion, the following point has been stressed: The reason that the inheritance of man is more is because the upkeep of women is upon the shoulders of men. In other words, aside from the fact that a man must look after himself, he is also responsible for the upkeep and

expenses of his wife and children. From another point of view, it is the man who gives .the dowry to the woman and she is the one who takes it from him

In reality, it is possible to say that what the woman takes in the form of inheritance and dowry is tantamount to her savings, whereas the portion of the inheritance of the man is spent on the expenses of his daily life and that of his wife and children. Aside from this, certain other responsibilities have been placed on the shoulders of a man, .which necessitate his spending money in order to carry them out

For example a man must spend money in the way of war, or if one of his relatives accidentally kills someone or injures someone he must pay certain monies to the family of the victim, whereas a woman has no responsibility in this regard. So even though what is apparent is that the share of a man in inheritance is two times that of a woman, in all practicality his share in the sum total of personal wealth is far less than hers. While on the other hand, in exchange for the "excess" inheritance, man has heavier responsibilities to shoulder than a woman. So in brief it can be said that the inheritance of men and women being different is so as to implement a sort of balance .between the rights and responsibilities of each group

Detailed Answer

Question ٣٣: The role a person plays in obtaining his sustenance

point

Question: What is the relationship between

?man’s efforts and the sustenance that has been measured out for him

The answer to this question can be explained in the form of two preliminaries and one :conclusion

First Premise: The sustenance that Allah (awj) has taken upon Himself is the following: The allotment and portion that must reach the creatures in order for them to continue existing. Of course the Divine pledge and the giving out of sustenance that we attribute to Allah (awj) is different from that of creatures. If it has come in the Qur`an that: “The sustenance of every creature is upon Allah.”(١) then one must not loose sight of the fact that the sustenance of the creatures is upon Allah (awj) and not any of His creatures. Allah (awj) is that being who has created the realm of existence and .who is the Creator of all things

For this reason, the promise of Allah (awj) differs from the promise of the creature that is itself part of this realm of existence and that is under the influence of the beings of this realm. To know the actions of Allah (awj) and His sustenance one must know the world. We are ourselves a part of this world and have responsibilities. Of course the responsibilities that we have with regards to sustenance - those which the laws of nature or laws of religion have laid upon us - are just so many minor aspects .(and weak manifestations of the all -pervasive sustenance of Allah (awj

The power of

١- Surat Hud (١١), Verse ۶: { وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِی الأَرْضِ إِلاَّ عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِی كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ }

digestion that is in plants, the desires that are in animate beings and that guide them towards food all are manifestations of Allah's (awj) sustenance. Ultimately, it is Allah (awj) who has taken control of each animal by means of the sum of its desires in order for it to go after all that it is in need of and so that it struggles and works to satisfy these desires. Thought, work, and effort are but preliminaries to Allah's (awj) sustenance. Allah (awj) has created an attraction between the sustenance and the one that partakes of the sustenance - sending one after the other. There is a special kind of connection between the various parts of existence that connects them with .one another

When a person is still an infant and does not have the power to find his own nourishment, his sustenance is provided for him. As he gradually gains more abilities and can find his sustenance by means of his constant pursuits, his sustenance will not be obtained so easily. For instance his sustenance may be situated in some far off .place, requiring him to set off and find it

As a general principle, there is some form of reciprocity between the accessibility of sustenance, the measure of strength and ability of the sustained being, and the amount of guidance that has been given to that being in order to reach the sustenance. For this very reason, man is considered a higher and more subtle being than the

plants and animals, and that which is sufficient for the plants and animals is not sufficient for him. The problem of his nourishment will differ from that of the other beings. The distance between the sustenance and the one who needs the sustenance .in the human world is far greater

Because of this, better means of survival have been put at his disposal and his guidance has been increased. Reason, knowledge, and thought have been given to him and revelation and prophethood have come to help him; while certain responsibilities have been put upon him. All of these are but dimensions of the .(sustenance of Allah (awj

In a certain poem it is said that the very existence of teeth calls forth the provision of bread for the teeth to chew on. Of course it does not mean that having teeth is sufficient in order for the bread to be cooked and made ready at the dinner table of a person. Rather it means that if there were no bread, there would have been no teeth; .and if there had been no teeth, there would have been no bread

In other words, there exists a relationship between sustenance, the one who uses the sustenance, the means of obtaining the sustenance, the digestive system, and the means of guidance. That Being who created man in nature and gave him teeth, has also created bread in the realm of nature. He has placed at his disposal thought, power, action and the sense of

.(responsibility. All of these are manifestations of the sustenance of Allah (awj

Second Premise: Sustenance and nourishment are of two kinds: That which we seek and that which seeks us.(١) The "sustenance that seeks" comes after us even if we run away from it. It does not let us go, even as escaping form the claws of death is impossible. It has been mentioned in a hadith that: "If the son of Adam were to run from his sustenance as he runs from his death, it would still find him, even as death will eventually find him."(٢) This kind of sustenance has roots in the Providence of Allah .(awj) and hence, no kind of change is possible in it

In connection with this matter the late sage, 'Allamah Tabataba`i has said, "Sustenance and the one who consumes the sustenance are necessary corollaries of one another. It is meaningless to assume that the one who needs sustenance is after his nourishment in his life, but there be no sustenance for him. It is also impossible that there be sustenance, but there be nobody to use that sustenance or that the sustenance be more than his needs. For this reason sustenance is part of the ".predetermined Providence of Allah

The "sought after sustenance" is the sustenance that has been measured out for the seeker. If we seek it and fulfil all the necessary conditions and actions that are necessary for obtaining it, we will reach it. In reality the effort we make in order

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١- Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter ٣١: وَاعْلَمْ يَا بُنَيَّ أَنَّ الرِّزْقَ رِزْقَانِ: رِزْقٌ تَطْلُبُهُ، وَرِزْقٌ يَطْلُبُكَ فَإِنْ أَنْتَ لَمْ تَأْتِهِ أَتَاكَ.

٢- Muntakhab Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ٢٥٦۴: لَوْ أَنَّ ابْنَ آدَمَ فَرَّ مِنْ رِزْقِهِ كَمَا يَفِرُّ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ لَأَدْرَكَهُ كَمَا يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ.

to reach this sustenance is a partial cause. If it is put alongside the other causes that lie in the unseen world, we will reach it for sure. In this connection our Master, the has said, "Seek after sustenance, (ع) Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (for certainly it is guaranteed for the one who goes after it."(١)

Just as effort without a guarantee of its giving fruit is meaningless, a guaranteed sustenance without any accompanying effort is also impossible (in the "sought after sustenance"). For this very reason, from amongst the two kinds of sustenance that Allah (awj) has allocated for His servants, He has made one unconditional (the .("sustenance that seeks"), and one conditional ("the sought after sustenance

The unconditional sustenance seeks man in all conditions and until the scales of man are not filled to their capacity with this kind of sustenance, his death will not come. No one will die until his sustenance" ,(ص) According to the saying of the Noble Prophet (has been completed."(٢)

The surety of the "sought after sustenance", however, is conditioned by the performance of certain actions and by taking into account certain matters. Without fulfilling these conditions and without putting them into order, this sustenance does .not come into being

The "sustenance that seeks", the one that is certain, is the sustenance that determines our very existence, our lifespan, the possibilities open to us, the environment we were put in, our family, and our predisposed talents. This kind of

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١- Muntakhab Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ٢٥٥٥: أُطْلُبُوا الرِّزْقَ فَإِنَّهُ مَضْمُونٌ لِطَالِبِهِ.

٢- Muntakhab Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ٢٥٦١: عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ص): ...أَنَّهُ لَنْ تَمُوتَ نَفْسٌ حَتَّى تَسْتَكْمِلَ رِزْقَهَا...

sustenance gives rise to the power, energy, and intelligence that we need in order to struggle and perform work; and it is in the wake of these that the door for the second .kind of sustenance—the conditioned sustenance—opens up for us

In order to obtain the "sought after sustenance," everyone must not only make their own efforts, but they must also raise his hands up towards Allah (awj) in utter poverty as it were. The nursing infant whose effort and struggle comes in the form of crying, pouting, and screaming will reach the milk of his mother by means of these kinds of actions. Yet when this child grows up and sets higher goals for himself, his effort and struggle will transform. It will change into thinking, working, and physical exertions. .Moreover, the quality of his sustenance will also change

To summarize, we may say that it is after the unconditional, certain "sustenance that seeks" that effort, struggle, work and action are created, and following this effort and desire the "sought after sustenance" comes into being. The certain sustenance is incapable of change or increase and decrease but the "sought after sustenance" is .capable of being increased or decreased

As to the latter, neither does the greediness of the greedy person make it come about, nor does the sadness of the lazy one prevent it from reaching us. However it can be increased or decreased given the right conditions and if its prerequisites are met. A person asked the Noble Prophet

(ص), I wish that my sustenance be increased." The Noble Prophet replied, "Keep yourself in the state of ablution so that your sustenance be increased."(1)

Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) has said, "One whose intentions are pure, his sustenance will be increased."(2)

Therefore it is necessary for us to make effort and to seek the best and safest means for reaching our sustenance, to use our faculties, and to trust in Allah (awj) who is the creator of this path. All this after having understood the relationship between sustenance and the one who needs it, and after having known that the means for obtaining sustenance have also been created, and after having realized that the responsibility for obtaining sustenance has been placed upon us.

Brief Answer

There are two kinds of sustenance. There is a sustenance that we go after and a sustenance that comes after us. In the traditions, the sustenance that comes after us is called "the sustenance that seeks," and the sustenance that we seek has been named "the sought after sustenance." The first is certain and is the sustenance that determines our very existence, our lifespan, the possibilities open to us, the environment we were put in, our family, and our predisposed talents. This kind of sustenance gives rise to the power, energy, and intelligence that we need in order to struggle and perform work; and it is in the wake of these that the door for the second kind of sustenance- the conditioned sustenance- opens up for us.

In order

۱- Muntakhab Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ۲۵۷۴: عَنْ رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ (ص) لَمَّا قِيلَ لَهُ: أُحِبُّ أَنْ يُوْسَعَ عَلَيَّ فِى رِزْقِى - يَدُمْ عَلى الطَّهَارَهِ يُوْسَعَ عَلَيْكَ فِى الرِّزْقِ.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۱۰۰, pg. ۲۱: قَالَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (ع): مَنْ حَسُنَتْ نِيَّتُهُ زِيْدَ فِى رِزْقِهِ.

to obtain the “sought after sustenance,” everyone must not only make their own efforts, but they must also raise their hands up towards Allah (awj) in utter poverty as it were. The nursing infant whose effort and struggle comes in the form of crying, pouting, and screaming will reach the milk of his mother by means of these kinds of actions. Yet when this child grows up and sets higher goals for himself, his effort and struggle will transform. It will change into thinking, working, and physical exertions. .Moreover, the quality of his sustenance will also change

In conclusion, we may say that it is only after the certain outcome of the “sustenance that seeks”—which is certain and unconditional—and after due efforts are made and the human will-power is engaged that the “sought after sustenance” comes into being. The certain sustenance is incapable of change or increase and decrease, but the “sought after sustenance” is capable of being increased or decreased, depending upon the order, quality, and composure of the actions that precede it- being counted .as amongst its prerequisites

Detailed Answer

Question ۳۴: Treatment of Illness and Supplication

point

Question: If a person falls ill, should he seek treatment a) with a doctor, or b) by eating ?dust from near Imam al-Husayn’s grave, or c) through supplication

Brief Answer

Each of the aforementioned actions could potentially cure his illness independently or by combining with the other two. However, the best course is to accompany all our actions—among which are medical and supernatural treatments—with supplication (which entails establishing a relationship with Allah

awj) and making a direct request from him). The reason for this is that the efficacy of) a doctor's treatment or a given medicine or, for that matter, the intercession of Imam and the dust from near his grave, is intrinsically tied to the will of (ع) Husayn b. 'Ali .Allah (awj) himself

and his (ص) It is also important to keep in mind that the intercession of the Prophet and supplications are not solutions limited to circumstances where one's (ع) family hope in natural means is lost. At the same time, making use of intercession and supplications does not imply that one should neglect natural solutions altogether because the divine plan for this world is that things occur as per their natural causes. Therefore, one can make use of all three aforementioned treatments. That is to say, along with supplicating to Allah (awj) and seeking the blessings of Imam Husayn b. 'Ali one should refer to a doctor and seek medical treatment so that Allah (awj) ,(ع) intercession, and thereby allows the medical treatment to (ع) accepts the Imam's .confer its desired effect

In short, under no circumstances should one lose hope in the favour of Allah (awj) and the intercession of the Prophet's family. Similarly, by no means should one cease to .take advantage of the natural means at his disposal

Detailed Answer

Medical treatment, the intercession of saints (especially by means of the dust from grave), and supplicating to Allah (awj), are all means of (ع) near Imam Husayn b. 'Ali's

.treating the sick, so long as the person's time of death has not arrived

Just as it is possible for each of these three treatments to act independently by the will of Allah (awj), thereby sufficing us of the remaining two, it is also possible that all three cures combine in order to cure the sick. In particular, supplication could cause intercession to be accepted so that the dust from near his grave (ع) the Imam's confers its healing effects. This in turn could cause the medical treatment to have its .optimal effects so that the person progresses swiftly towards well-being

However, it should be noted that the efficacy of medical treatments, and even the and the dust from his grave, is intrinsically tied to the will (ع) intercession of the Imam of Allah (awj). Therefore, as a precondition to these other treatments, supplication to Allah (awj) holds a special place. Supplication establishes a direct connection with Allah (awj) and reaffirms our belief that nothing other than him can act independently .((this is known as "Allah's unity in action" or "al-tawhid fil af'al

It is for this reason that we have been strongly advised to begin every action—including seeking the intercession of saints—by supplicating to Allah (awj) for His aid, special favour, and His acceptance of their intercession. Such advice is especially well-spoken considering the difficulties entailed in finding a skilled doctor, diagnosing an illness accurately, prescribing effective medicines, followed by a strenuous recovery —all of which make seeking Allah's (awj) aid

a vital necessity.

An additional difficulty in seeking a miraculous cure through the dust of Imam Husayn b. 'Ali (ع), is that the efficacy of this cure requires the following prerequisites, the observance of which is difficult in this day and age:

١. The dust must be from within the sanctuary(١) of Imam Husayn b. 'Ali (ع) and must be reddish in colour.

٢. Once removed from the haram complex, the dust must be wrapped in a cloth so as not to be touched by those jinn who hold an enmity toward the Shi'a and lay in wait for an opportunity to touch the dust thereby neutering its miraculous effects.

٣. Only a minute amount of the dust must be used.

۴. It must be used with a pure intention without an inkling of doubt in its power to heal.

۵. It must be accompanied by supplications to Allah (awj) for the acceptance of the intercession of Imam Husayn b. 'Ali (ع).(٢)

However, not to make things seem hopeless, seeking the intercession of Imam Husayn b. 'Ali (ع), the rest of the Prophet's family, or other saints, and seeking the blessings of the dust from each of their respective graves, when accompanied by a pure intention, is not without its effects, as testified to by numerous people's experiences. It should be noted that for prayers to be answered and for the intercession of saints to be accepted by the will of Allah (awj), the following conditions must be fulfilled:

١. The suppliant must be sincere and focused and

١- Or "Ha'ir," a radius of about ٣۵٧ metres around the shrine of the Noble Imam.

٢- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٩٨, pg. ١٣٢: فَإِذَا أَكَلْتَ مِنْ طِينِ قَبْرِ الْحُسَيْنِ (ع) فَقُلْ: أَللُّهُمَّ إِنِّی أَسْأَلُکَ بِحَقِّ الْمَلَکِ الَّذِی قَبَضَهَا وَ بِحَقِّ النَّبِیِّ الَّذِی خَزَنَهَا وَ بِحَقِّ الْوَصِیِّ الَّذِی هُوَ فِیهَا أَنْ تُصَلِّیَ عَلَی مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِی فِیهِ شِفَاءً مِنْ کُلِّ

دَاءٍ وَ عَافِيَةً مِنْ كُلِّ بَلَاءٍ وَ أَمَاناً مِنْ كُلِّ خَوْفٍ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ وَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ وَ سَلَّمَ. وَ تَقُولُ أَيْضاً: أَللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ هَذِهِ التُّرْبَةَ تُرْبَةُ وَلِيِّكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّهَا شِفَاءٌ مِنْ كُلِّ دَاءٍ وَ أَمَانٌ مِنْ كُلِّ خَوْفٍ لِمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ وَ لِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ.

should accompany his supplication with salutations and prayers (salawat) for the .along with heartfelt repentance for past sins (ع) Prophet and his family

He must have performed all obligatory acts of worship and must have paid all .٢ .(mandatory Islamic taxes (khums and zakat

He must not hold any belligerence to the way of life (sunnah) of the Prophet and his .٣ .(ع) household

.He must act according to the teachings of the Qur`an .۴

.He must be thankful to Allah (awj) under all circumstances .۵

He must actively fulfil his duty to enjoin the good and forbid the evil (al-amr bi'l .۶ .(ma'ruf wa'l nahyu 'ani'l munkar

He must accompany his prayers with the appropriate natural and supernatural .٧ means at his disposal (that is to say, his prayers should not issue from laziness and .(farfetched hopes

.He should have no unfulfilled obligations to people .٨

.He must be wont to fulfil all promises and pledges .٩

Occasionally, it occurs that despite the fact that none of the aforementioned is (ع) conditions is fulfilled, a prayer is answered or the intercession of an Imam accepted. The philosophy behind such an apparently unwarranted acceptance might :be one of several things

.It might be to soften the person's heart by showing him divine grace .١

Perhaps it is to fulfil the divine call (itmam al-hujjah) upon a person. In the extreme .٢ circumstances surrounding sickness, when all natural means seem to fade away, the increase, thereby closing the ,(ع) favours of Allah (awj) and in turn the Prophet's family doors of doubt

to even the greatest sophist. If this person, after experiencing divine grace, returns to his past improprieties, he will be left with no excuse on the Day of Judgment.

۳. It is also possible that Allah’s (awj) acceptance of this person’s supplications was a reward for a past act of goodness or an act of devotion with respect to one of Allah’s (awj) saints in such a way as to take the place of the person’s reward in the next life.

In conclusion, it is important to keep in mind that one must not look to prayer and intercession as a last resort to be used only when all hope in natural causes—and in particular medical treatment—fades, only to be forgotten when treatment is successfully achieved. This kind of misappropriation is treated with severity in the Qur`an and ahadith(۱). If one were to make such an opportunistic use of supplication, his prayers may be answered and full health might be restored; however, in the afterlife, he would be severely punished, since despite experiencing divine grace, he turned away from Allah after being cured.

On the other hand, one must never lose hope. As Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) has said, “Allah refuses to make things happen except through (their) causes.”(۲)

Allah (awj) is the Cause of all causes, however, just as He is the Cause of all causes, He can also destroy all causes as evidenced by the knife that did not cut Isma’il’s (ع) throat or the fire that did

p: ۲۶۱

۱- Surat Luqman (۳۱), Verse ۳۲: { وَإِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَوْجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوُا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا كُلُّ خَتَّارٍ كَفُورٍ } See also: Surat al-’Ankabut (۲۹), Verse ۶۵; Surat Yunus (۱۰), Verses ۱۲, ۲۲ ۲۳

۲- al-Kafi, vol. ۱, pg. ۱۸۳: عَنْ أَبِی عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) أَنَّهُ قَالَ: أَب_ی اللَّهُ أَنْ یَجْرِیَ الْأَشْیَاءَ إِلَّا بِأَسْبَابٍ...

Other times, without any material cause, Allah (awj) acts .(ع) not burn Ibrahim independently through unseen causes as is evidenced by the story of the camel of In short, while we make use of all natural causes at .(ع) and the staff of Musa (ع)Salih our disposal, it is advisable to maintain an active relationship with Allah (awj) through .supplications, and with Allah's (awj) friends

Question ۳۵: Canonization of the Qur'an

point

Question: It is clear that when the Prophet Muhammad dictated the verses of the Qur`an, his designated scribes would write down the verses. However, when exactly ?was the entire Qur`an compiled into the form we know today

:There are three prevailing views concerning the compilation of the Qur`an

The compilation took place .(ص) It was compiled during the lifetime of the Prophet .۱ under his supervision—which is tantamount to divine inspiration—although he himself .neither wrote the text of the Qur`an nor collected the verses directly

after the (ع) The Qur`an that we have today was compiled by Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib .۲ .Prophet's death but before people finally accepted him as a caliph

The Qur`an was compiled after the Prophet's death by a handful of the Prophet's .۳ .((ع) companions (other than Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib

Most Shi'i scholars—especially contemporary scholars—accept the first view. Some Shi'i scholars have taken the second stance. However, many Sunni scholars have accepted the third view. Orientalists have also accepted this view and have added was virtually ignored by the (ع) that the Qur`an written by Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib .companions

,Obviously

on the basis of the first two opinions, the compilation of the Qur`an, its division into surahs (chapters), and the order within and among the surahs can be attributed to the divine will. In particular, based on the verse that reads,

“He does not speak of his own will; he only speaks what is revealed to him,”(١)

whatever the Prophet utters (especially that which relates directly to religious matters) is divinely inspired. Additionally, Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع), though he was not a prophet, served in his capacity as an Imam, as the continuation of the mission of prophethood, and possessed the prophetic gifts of infallibility and divine knowledge. Therefore, any compilation undertaken by either the Prophet (ص) or Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) was necessarily divinely inspired.

Those who favour the third view cannot logically defend any claim that the division of the Qur`an into surahs or the order into which the surahs have been arranged is divinely inspired. In fact, the third view, in essence, rejects any Divine hand in these two matters. Rather, it attributes the division and arrangement of the surahs to the personal judgement of the Prophet’s companions.

Answer

Question ٣۶: The names of the Imams in the Qur’an

point

Question: Why aren’t the names of the Imams expressly mentioned in the Qur`an?

Brief Answer

It must be noted that although the names of the pure Imams (ع) are not specified in the Qur`an, the Prophet (ص) did assert their names, especially the name of Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع). A very clear instance of such assertion

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١- Surat al-Najm (۵٣), Verses ٣-۴: وَ مَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَى. إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ وَحْىٌ يُوحَـــى

occurs in hadith Ghadir, which is considered the official announcement of the Regarding the question of transmission, this .(ع) caliphate of Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib hadith is mutawatir [i.e. it has been narrated through so many lines of transmission that it can be accepted without doubt.] and its content reveals clear evidence for the .(ع) Imamate of Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib

Moreover, there are several verses in the Qur`an that pertain to the status of Imam ;the most important of which is verse ۵۵ of Surat al-Ma`idah ,(ع) 'Ali b. Abi Talib

Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and" ".give the zakat while bowing down

In books of exegesis and history, both among the Shi'ite and Sunni sources, it has been pointed out that this verse was revealed after the event in which Imam 'Ali b. Abi gave his ring to a poor beggar as charity while he was bowing down in prayer, (ع) Talib Thus, although .(ع) and so this verse refers to no other than Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib has not been mentioned in the Qur`an by name, there are (ع) Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib .evident references to him

have not been mentioned by name, at least two answers (ع) But as to why the Imams .could be propounded

Firstly, the normal pattern of the Qur`an is to deal with issues in a general tone, providing the general principles and rules, without getting into the explanation of

the minute details. This is the method the Qur`an takes up in many instances and it is was asked about (ع) for this reason that when Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq this question, he replied that, "It is the same case with the daily prayer, the zakat, and hajj: Allah has mentioned only their general rules in the Qur`an but has not elucidated who expressed the precise method of carrying out (ص) the details. It was the Prophet such duties and their related details. In the same vein, regarding the question of (ع) himself specified the names of 'Ali and his household (ص) succession, the Prophet as his successors and so there was no need for their names to have been expressed .in the Qur`an itself

Secondly, in such an issue, where there was a good chance of opposition, prudence necessitated that the Qur`an mention the issue indirectly and through allusions for there was the possibility that opposition to the issue of Imamate might lead to opposition to the Qur`an and the main core of Islam, which was certainly not in the interest of the Muslims. That is, if there were a verse specifying the succession of 'Ali the opponents would have distorted it out of their opposition to him, and this ,(ع) would have violated the value of Islam and the Qur`an as the final religion and the eternal and divine book. For, it should be borne in mind that one of the ways by which the Qur`an could be

,preserved—for Allah (awj) has asserted

Indeed We have sent down the Reminder [i.e. the Qur`an] and indeed We will“ (preserve it.”(١

.is to remove the natural motives for opposition and distortion

and ;(ع) Hence, the Qur`an, firstly, refrains from expressing the names of the Imams (ع) secondly, places the verses that are related to the question of Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib successorship, the Verse of Tabligh (which regards the official announcement of successorship), and the Verse of Tathir (which regards the (ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib’s infallibility of the Prophet’s household) between other apparently unrelated verses so as to diminish, as much as possible, the motives for distortion and in so doing secure .the Qur`an against all possible attacks

Detailed Answer

To begin with, the reader’s attention should be drawn to the fact that the names of especially the blessed ,(ص) were mentioned expressly by the Prophet (ع) the Imams whose successorship was affirmed by the Prophet ,(ع) name of Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib .on several occasions (ص)

mission when he embarked (ص) One occasion was at the beginning of the Prophet’s on spreading his message to his clan and family, saying, “The first [of you] to believe in me will be my spiritual heir (wasi), my vizier, and my successor.” To this offer no one and so finally the Prophet ,(ع) gave a positive answer except for Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (said, “After me, you will be my spiritual heir, my vizier, and my successor.”(٢ (ص)

Another occasion was the

١- Surat al-Hijr (١٥), Verse ٩: ﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَ إِنَّا لَهُ لَحٰفِظُونَ ﴾

٢- al-’Umdah, pg. ١٢١,١٣٣; Ghayat al-Maram, pg. ٣٢٠; al-Ghadir, vol. ٢ pp. ٢٧٨-٢٧٩: فَأَخَذَ بِرُقْبَتِي ثُمَّ قَالَ: إِنَّ هٰذَا أَخِي وَوَصِيِّي وَخلِيفَتِي فِيكُمْ فَاسْمَعُوا لَهُ وَأَطِيعُوا.

event at Ghadir Khum in which he expressly said, “Whomever I am his master, then ‘Ali (ع) is also his master.”(۱)

Another of such assertions appears in the hadith of Manzilat in which the Prophet (ص) is related as having told Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع), “You are to me what Harun was to Musa, except that there will be no prophet coming after me.”(۲)

It should be noted that the related sayings of the Prophet (ص) regarding the successorship of Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) are too numerous to be impugned, and this point has been alluded to in many Sunni and Shi’ite books.(۳)

In another hadith, the Prophet (ص) is recorded to have specifically mentioned the names of all the Imams—starting with Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) and up to Imam Mahdi (ع) — to Jabir b. ‘Abdullah Ansari.(۴)

Thus this fact must be kept in mind that although the names of the Imams (ع) do not appear in the Qur`an, but the Prophet (ص) — whose sayings are, according to the Qur`an, all true and are essentially revelations(۵)—did specify their names and reiterated their successorship and leadership.

Furthermore, in the Qur`an there is an allusion to the Commander of the Faithful’ position of leadership, and although his name has not been mentioned there, nevertheless, the majority of the exegetes, whether Shi’ite or Sunni, admit that the allusion refers to ‘Ali’s (ع) status, and as such applies to no other than him.(۶) The

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۱- This hadith is mutawatir and exists in both Shi’ah and Sunni books. ‘Allamah Amini, in his book al-Ghadir (vol. ۱ pg. ۱۱۴), has gathered the narrators of this hadith from all sources and put them in chronological order. At the top of this list are ۶۰ of the Noble Prophet’s companions which Sunni books use as narrators. In his book ‘Abaqat, Mir Hamid Husayn has also proven this hadith to be mutawatir. (refer to: Ibn al-Maghazili, Manaqib, pp. ۲۵-۲۶)

۲- al-’Umdah, pg. ۱۷۳-۱۷۵; Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, vol. ۳ pg. ۳۲; al-Ghadir, vol. ۱, pg.

فقال لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: أَمَا تَرْضى أَنْ تَكونَ مِنِّی بِمَنْزِلَهِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسى ۵۱, also vol. ۳, pg. ۱۹۷-۲۰۱
إِلاَّ أَنَّهُ لاَ نَبِیَّ بَعْدِی؟

۳- Allamah Amini and Mir Hamid Husayn have put forth much effort in proving the' tawatur of hadith's on the Imamate of Imam 'Ali (ع). Fadil Quchani, a Sunni scholar who has rejected the tawatur of some of these hadith's, has accepted the tawatur of some others.

۴- Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, vol. ۳, pg. ۳۹۸-۳۹۹: سَمِعْتُ جَابِرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الأَنْصَارِیُّ یَقُولُ: قَالَ لِی رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص): یَا جَابِرُ إِنَّ أَوْصِیَائِی وَأَئِمَّهِ الْمُسْلِمِینَ مِنْ بَعْدِی أَوَّلُهُمْ عَلِیٌّ، ثُمَّ الْحَسَنُ، ثُم الْحُسَینُ، ثُمَّ عَلِیُّ بْنُ الْحُسَیْنِ، ثمَّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِیّ الْمَعْرُوْفُ بِالْبَاقِرِ سَتُدْرِکُهُ یَا جَابِرُ فَإِذَا لَقِیْتَهُ فَاقْرَأْهُ مِنِّیْ السَّلَامَ، ثُمَّ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، ثُمَّ مُوْسى بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، ثُمَّ عَلِیُّ بْنُ مُوْسى، ثُمَّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِیّ، ثُمَّ عَلِیُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، ثُمَّ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِیّ، ثُمَّ الْقَائِمُ اسْمُهُ اِسْمِیْ وَکُنْیَتُهُ کُنْیَتِیْ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِیّ، ذَاکَ الَّذِی یَفْتَحُ اللَّهُ - تَبَارَکَ وَتَعَالى - عَلى یَدَیْهِ مَشَارِقَ الأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا، ذَاکَ الَّذِی یَغِیْبُ عَنْ أَوْلِیَائِهِ غَیْبَهً لاَ یُثْبُتُ عَلى الْقَوْلِ بِإِمَامَتِهِ إِلاَّ مَنِ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ لِلإِیْمَانِ.

۵- Surat al-Najm (۵۳), Verses ۳-۴: وَمَا یَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَى. إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ وَحْیٌ یُوحَى

۶- Refer to tafsir books under verse ۵۵ of Surat al-Ma`idah such as: al-Tafsir al-Kabir by Fakhr Razi; Tafsir-e-Namuneh; al-Durr al-Manthur. Some Sunni books of tradition have also mentioned this event - refer to: Dhakhayir al-'Uqba, pg. ۸۸; Lubab al-Nuqul, pg. ۹۰; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. ۶ pg. ۳۹۱. A list of books containing other books can be found in Tafsir-e-Nemuneh, vol. ۴, pg. ۴۲۵.

,verse in which that allusion occurs is verse ۵۵ of Surat al-Ma`idah, which reads

Your guardian is only Allah, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and“ (give the zakat while bowing down.”(۱

Considering that in Islam there is no such rule that the Muslim should give zakat while bowing down in prayer, it becomes evident that this verse is referring to an incident that really took place. That incident took place on the day when Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib was performing the ritual bow in the prayer, a beggar came up to him and asked (ع) him for some help. In response, Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) pointed to his ring, and so the beggar took the ring off of his finger and left.

According to the reading derived from the aforementioned historical incident, the verse asserts that the leadership of the Muslims is “only” in the hands of Allah (awj), his Apostle, and Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع), and no other but them enjoys that status.

Hence, up to this point, it has been clarified that the names of the Imams (ع) were expressly mentioned by the Prophet (ص) and that there is an unmistakable allusion in the Qur`an to the Commander of the Faithful’ position of leadership. These points are such that if an impartial person intends to clarify the truth for himself, he will, with only a little amount of research, realize that the Prophet’s (ص) opinion regarding the question of

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۱- Surat al-Ma`idah (۵), Verse ۵۵: إِنَّـــمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلاَةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ .

and his pure (ع) successorship and leadership was in favour of Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib .sons

But as to why their names are not specifically mentioned in the Qur`an, two .justifications could be proposed

First, the normal procedure that the Qur`an takes up is dealing with issues in a general manner and in the form of general rules and principles without enumerating their details, such as is the case about many of the fundamental and minor principles mentioned in the Qur`an. This answer has been suggested in a hadith narrated from (ع) and according to the narration, the Imam ,(ع) Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq .corroborates his answer by providing three examples

One is how the issue of the ritual prayer is dealt with in the Qur`an. The Qur`an’s .١ mention of the prayer is only a general description without elucidating the quality [i.e. the method] or quantity [i.e. how many times each act must be repeated during the explained to the Muslims the (ص) course of a prayer] of every prayer. But the Prophet manner in which the prayer should be preformed and the number of the raka’at [pl. of rak’ah, the most general part of the ritual prayer, consisting of recitation of parts of the Qur`an while erect, then bowing, thereafter standing up and from there going down for prostration, after which one sits up and then again falls in prostration before .[(ع) Allah

cited was the issue of zakat, which (ع) Another example that the Imam .٢

(ص) has been introduced in the Qur`an in a general manner, and it was the Prophet who determined the items to which zakat pertained and the amounts with which the zakat of each item is identified.

۳. His third example was the issue of hajj, about which the Qur`an only expresses its obligatory nature, while it was the Prophet (ص) who personally demonstrated to the Muslims the method by which this ritual should be carried out.(۱)

Thus, it is unreasonable to expect that the Qur`an should examine the details of all religious issues. And so it is with regards to the issue of the leadership of the Prophet's household (ع), the fact that the names of the Imams (ع) have not been specified should not be cited as grounds for rejecting the school of the Ahlul Bayt (ع) (the household of the Prophet), just as one should not curtail the noon prayer from four rak'ats to two rak'ats, for instance, with the excuse that the Qur`an does not specify that it should be four rak'ats, or just as one should not refrain from performing the ritual cycles around the Ka'bah with the excuse that it has not been expressed in the Qur`an.

The second justification is that regarding such a controversial issue, where there existed a high risk of opposition, prudence dictated that the Qur`an mention the issue in an implicit manner, for there was the risk that opposition to the issue of the Commander of the Faithful' leadership might even

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۱ – al-Kafi, vol. ۱, pg. ۲۸۶-۲۸۷: عَنْ أَبِی بَصِیرٍ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: أَطِیعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِیعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِی الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَقَالَ: نَزَلَتْ فِی عَلِیِّ بْنِ أَبِی طَالِبٍ وَالْحَسَنِ وَالْحُسَیْنِ عَلَیْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: إِنَّ النَّاسَ یَقُولُونَ: فَمَا لَهُ لَمْ یُسَمِّ عَلِیّاً وَأَهْلَ بَیْتِهِ عَلَیْهِمُ السَّلَامُ فِی كِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ؟ قَالَ: فَقَالَ: قُولُوا لَهُمْ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (ص) نَزَلَتْ عَلَیْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَلَمْ یُسَمِّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ثَلَاثاً وَلَا أَرْبَعاً، حَتَّى كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) هُوَ الَّذِی فَسَّرَ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ، وَنَزَلَتْ عَلَیْهِ الزَّكَاةُ وَلَمْ یُسَمِّ لَهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَرْبَعِینَ دِرْهَماً دِرْهَمٌ، حَتَّى كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) هُوَ الَّذِی فَسَّرَ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ، وَنَزَلَ الْحَجُّ فَلَمْ یَقُلْ لَهُمْ: طُوفُوا أُسْبُوعاً حَتَّى كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) هُوَ الَّذِی فَسَّرَ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ.

jeopardize the integrity of the Qur`an itself. Thus a direct mention of the issue was certainly not in the interest of the Muslim community. For, it should be noted that one of the methods for preserving the Qur`an from any distortion, as promised by Allah ,((awj

,(Indeed We have sent down the Reminder, and indeed We will preserve it;"(١"

is precisely this: To express the issues in such a way as to eliminate any motives on the side of the pseudo-Muslim hypocrites for distortion, so that groups that do carry strong motives for distortion, out of material desires or opposition to the truth, would not alter the Qur`an to conform it to their inclinations, thereby violating the integrity .of the Qur`an

Ayatullah Mutahhari expresses this explanation in the following manner: "As to the (ع) question of why the Qur`an has not specifically mentioned the issue of 'Ali's successorship, they answer is as follows: Firstly, the norm of the Qur`an is to express or Allah (awj) (ص) issues in the form of general principles, and secondly, the Prophet did not want to propound this issue [i.e. the issue of the leadership of the Muslim community]—an issue that was at risk of being manipulated by men out of .egocentrism and ambition—so bluntly

had (ص) For, just as they [i.e. the opponents] so readily disregarded what the Prophet said about this issue on the basis of various excuses—including the claim to ijtihad [i.e. said in this regard was his (ص) that what the Prophet

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١- :٩ Surat al-Hijr (١٥), Verse إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ .

own personal view and we also have the right to put forward and follow our own opinions]—and so justified their position by claiming that the Prophet (ص) did not intend the leadership of 'Ali (ع) when he said those things about him, but rather he actually meant such and such, if there were a verse in this relation, they would just as well have misinterpreted it.

The Prophet (ص) in his statements said very clearly, "This here 'Ali (ع) is his [i.e. the Muslim's] master." Would you like anything more frank than this! But there is a difference between discarding a statement of the Prophet (ص), albeit so clear, and that of a verse of the Qur`an clearly mentioning the issue, especially only a day after the demise of the Prophet (ص).

It was for this reason that I related the following story in the preface to my book, Succession and Leadership:

During the Commander of the Faithful reign, a Jew wanted to scold the Muslim community concerning the events surrounding the Prophet's death—and they did really deserve scolding! He told 'Ali (ع), "You had not buried your prophet before you opposed each other regarding him." The Commander of the Faithful retorted, "We opposed each other not regarding him but regarding a verdict that he had addressed to us. But as to you; your feet were still soaked from the sea [which Musa had miraculously split in half] when you told your prophet, 'make for us a God like the

gods that they have.' He [i.e. Musa] said, 'You are indeed an ignorant lot.' So there is a big difference between what happened amongst us and what happened amongst you. We did not quarrel over the Prophet himself, but rather about what was the ".actual content of his command. These two are very different

It is very different to justify a mistake—although this justification might not be the real cause for the mistake but only a pretext for the real cause of the mistake—by saying that those who made the mistake thought their claim was in accordance with intended, and in so doing manipulated the Prophet's statement (ص) what the Prophet —such justification is better than to say that those who made the mistake discarded .the related Qur`anic verse despite its clarity, to say that they distorted the Qur`an

Therefore, it can be said that the main point in not specifying the names of the Imams in the Qur`an, or at least the name of the Commander of the Faithful, was securing (ع) .the Qur`an against any distortion

Thus, as can be witnessed, the Verses of Tathir, Tabligh, and Wilayat are inserted or the verses about the ,(ص) among the verses regarding the wives of the Prophet rules pertaining to the People of the Book and those explaining that Muslims should not make friends with them [i.e. the People of the Book], which apparently have no and Imam (ع) bearing on the issue of the leadership of the pure Imams

Thus an impartial researcher can, with the slightest attention .(ع) Ali b. Abi Talib‘ realize that the tone of the part of the verse pertaining to the issue in question diverges from the main body of the verse and that it has been placed there for a .[certain reason [namely, concealment

Question ۳۷: Imamate at Childhood

point

Question: How is it possible for some of the Imams to reach Imamate while still ?children

Brief Answer

According to the undisputed belief of Imami Shi'ism taken from numerous verses and Prophetic traditions, the Imamate is a Divine position. So if it is established that someone has been divinely appointed to this position a Muslim must submit to his command and authority without question obeying Allah (awj) as He says, “Allah best ”.knows where to place His messengership

There are several ways to ascertain whether Allah (awj) has appointed a particular :person to this position

.Prophetic traditions .۱

.Being introduced and specified by other Imams, particularly the previous Imam .۲

Possessing the other conditions of Imamate, such as inherent knowledge, more .۳ knowledge than anyone of their time, infallibility, soundness and moderation of body .and spirit, and ability to perform miracles and extraordinary deeds

The Shi'as contemporary to young Imams—that is, Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Taqi at nine years, and Imam al- (ع) at eight years, Imam ‘Ali b Muhammad al-Naqi (ع) at five years—were not unaware of these things, and it was after great (ع) Mahdi searching and effort that they attained certainty about their Imamate and submitted to their authority. Later generations in turn

rely on research, historical records, and traditions. On the other hand, the position of Imamate, unseen Divine endorsement, and manifestation of extraordinary deeds at the hands of these personages prevent them from being compared to normal human beings.

In addition, for a Muslim who believes in the Qur`an, the granting of a Divine station on the basis of Divine wisdom, knowledge, and grace to someone of young age should not be surprising, since the prophethood of ‘Isa (ع), Yahya (ع), and Sulayman (ع) also took place at a young age. This is why the noble verses that indicate this point were frequently cited by the Imams (ع).

Detailed Answer

Imamate, in the view of Imami Shi'as, is the practice by the Wali (Divinely appointed authority) of his authority over people (wilayah); in other words, Imamate is a Divinely-appointed station for managing the people's worldly and religious affairs as well as guiding them to the peak of felicity and humanity. Thus, the Imam cannot be determined or selected by the people, since inherent knowledge and inner infallibility are unseen qualities which no one but Allah (awj) knows, and these are the two most important qualities of the Divinely-appointed Wali.

A monotheist who has submitted to Divine authority over him or herself is wholly obedient to the commands and prohibitions of his or her Allah (awj). Thus, in accepting the authority of the leaders appointed by Him as well, he or she must be fully obedient, submit to their authority, and avoid comparing them to others or

baselessly second-guessing their appointment. There are several ways to recognize :(the divinely appointed Imam/Wali (guardian

.Studying their conduct and actions .۱

Referring to the attributes and signs that the previous Wali has mentioned for the .۲ .succeeding Wali

Seeking miracles and verifying the presence of the conditions and necessary . ۳ corollaries of Imamate

It is possible to find out about their lives and character by referring to books of history and biography, and by looking at collections of traditions one can find the traditions and finally by examining at the traditions ;(ص) that have come down from the Prophet performed (ع) of each Imam, one can come to recognize the next Imam. The Imams miracles both in their lifetimes and after their martyrdoms. The occurrence of such extraordinary deeds for those who sought recourse to them is so frequent that it is beyond reckoning, and it is something that everyone searching for truth can .experience

So there is no specific age necessary to attain the station of Imamate. The spiritual, intellectual, and mental maturity required for the position can be granted by Allah (awj) from the day of his birth. This fact is one of the extraordinary phenomena that prove their Imamate, it does not detract from it. Obviously, from a superficial and shortsighted viewpoint, it appears difficult for prominent personalities, scholars and the old and young to submit to the authority of a boy; for ordinary people accepting .such an authority would not be as easy as accepting older Wali

The contemporaries to

who became Imam at (ع) the young Imams—that is, Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Taqi who attained the Imamate at the (ع) the age of eight, Imam ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Naqi who became Imam at the age of five—were no (ع) age of nine, and Imam al-Mahdi exceptions to this rule, and they posed this very question to Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida .(ع)

For example, there are the following traditions: It has been narrated from Hasan ibn Imam Muhammad .(ع) Jahm that he was in the presence of Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida still a child, was also present. After a long conversation Imam ‘Ali b. ,(ع) b. ‘Ali al-Taqi said to me, “Hasan! If I tell you this child is to be your Imam, what (ع) Musa al-Rida would you say?” I said, “May I be your ransom! Whatever you say, I say the same (ع) said, “You speak the truth.” Then Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida (ع) thing.” The Imam and showed me a symbol (ع) exposed the shoulder of Imam Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Taqi that was similar to two fingers, and he said, “A comparable symbol was in the same place in the body of Imam Musa b. Ja’far al-Kazim (ع).”[1]

It has also been narrated from al-Mahmudi that he said, ‘I was in Tus (an area in Central Asia near present-day Mashhad) in the presence of Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida (ع). One of his companions said, “If something were to happen to the Imam,

p: ٢٧٧

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١ - Mowsu‘ah al-Imam al-Jawad, vol. ١, pg. ١٣٧: وَرُوِيَ عَنْ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ الْجَهْمِ قَالَ: دَخَلْتُ عَلَى الرِّضَا (ع) وَأَبُو جَعْفَرٍ (ع) صَغِيْرٌ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ فَقَالَ لِيْ بَعْدَ كَلَامٍ طَوِيْلٍ جرى لَوْ قُلْتُ لَكَ يَا حُسَيْنُ إِنَّ هَذَا إِمَامٌ مَا كُنْتَ تَقُوْلُ؟ قَالَ: قُلْتُ: مَا تَقُوْلُ لَهُ لِيْ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ. قَالَ: أَصَبْتَ، ثُمَّ كَشَفَ عَنْ كَتِفِ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ (ع) فَأَرَانِيْ مِثْلَ رَمْزِ إِصْبَعَيْنِ فَقَالَ لِيْ: مِثْلُ هَذَا كَانَ فِي مِثْلِ هَذَا الْمَوْضِعِ مِنْ أَبِي مُوْسَى صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ.

turned to him and (ع) who would be the divinely chosen Imam after him? The Imam said, "Regarding the issue of Imamate, after me refer to my son Jawad (Imam He (al-Mahmudi) said, "He is still a child!" Imam 'Ali b. ".((ع) Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Taqi as His messenger though he was (ع) replied, "Allah chose 'Isa (ع) Musa al-Rida (١)".(ع) younger than Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Taqi

followers out of (ع) In spite of these traditions some of Imam 'Ali b. Musa al-Rida's anxiety still went in search of his successor. "Some of them went after 'Abdullah ibn Since they weren't willing to accept .(ع) Musa, the brother of the eighth Imam anyone's Imamate without evidence, they presented to him some questions, and when they found him unable to answer they forsook him." This is because what was important to them was the manifestation of this divine aspect in the Imams' knowledge. This is also why they would apply this principle to all the Imams and subject them to various questions, and only when they felt that they were able to answer them (along with the textual declarations of their Imamate) would the Imami Shi'as recognize them as infallible Imams. The young Imams were no exceptions to this rule; the leaders of the Shi'as would examine them to become certain of their .level of knowledge and ability to perform clear miracles

On the other hand, the enemies of the Imams, who were always waiting for an opportunity to marginalize the Imams

١- Dala'il al-Imamah, pg. ٣٨٨. عَنِ الْمَحْمُودِى قَالَ: كُنْتُ وَاقِفاً عَلى رَأْسِ الرِّضَا (ع) بِطُوسِ فَقَالَ لَهُ بَعْضُ أَصْحَابِهِ: إِنْ حَدَثَ حَدَثٌ فَإِلَى مَنْ؟ قَالَ: إِلَى ابْنِى أَبِى جَعْفَرٍ. قَالَ: فَإِنِ اسْتَصْغَرَ سِنَّهُ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبُو الْحَسَنِ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَعَثَ عِيسى بْنَ مَرْيَمَ قَائِماً بِشَرِيعَتِهِ فِى دُوْنِ السِّنِّ الَّتِى يَقُوْمُ فِيْهَا أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَلى شَرِيْعَتِهِ.

and disperse the Shi’as from around them, did not sit by idly. Arranging intellectual gatherings and the like they strove to make the young age of these Imams an excuse to altogether marginalize them from society. But the more effort they made, the more they debased themselves, and the superior knowledge of the Imams stood out to .their knowledgeable contemporaries

In addition, it is obvious to those familiar with the Qur`an and stories of the prophets that several of them reached the station of prophethood, messengership and even etc. The majority of prophets (٢)(ع) Yahya ,(١)(ع) Imamate at a young age, like ‘Isa .reached this stage, however, at the age of forty or older

In sum this issue should be referred to the Divine wisdom and knowledge, and as in all judgments one should make use of all available contexts, evidences, and proofs. As Allah (awj) says

Say, O Lord! Yours is the dominion of the sky and the earth; You give the kingdom to “ whom You please and take it from whom You please, and You grant honor to whom You please and debase whom You please. All good is in Your hands. Verily You have (power over all things.”(٣

Allah (awj) explains similar objections of the Tribes of Israel and replies in these :words

The Prophet told them, Verily Allah has made Talut your king. They said how can he “ be king, while we are more worthy of kingship than he, and he is lacking in wealth? He

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١- ﴿ :Surat Maryam (١٩), Verses ٢٩-٣٠ فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا. قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا... ﴾

٢- ﴿ :Ibid., Verse ١٢ يَا يَحْيَى خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا ﴾

٣- ﴿ :Surat Ali-’Imran (٣), Verse ٢٦ قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾

their prophet] said Allah has chosen him over you and has granted him intellectual] and physical abilities, and Allah gives His kingdom to whomever He pleases, and Allah is all-encompassing, all-knowing. And the prophet said to them, Verily the sign of His kingdom is that there shall come to you the chest in which there is tranquility from your Lord and residue of the relics of what the children of Musa and the children of (Harun have left, the angels bearing it”(١)

Question ٣٨: Conditions to the fulfilment of Prayer

point

?Question: What are the conditions that guarantee the fulfilment of a prayer

Brief Answer

The word du’a (supplication) literally means “to call”, “to request a favour”, “to seek help” and in some cases it is used to denote the general meaning of calling. But in its [popular and] technical sense, it refers to the act of making a request from Allah (awj). The word du’a and its derivatives have been used in the Qur`an in approximately .thirteen different meanings

As supplication is a form of worship, it has like all other forms of worship certain requirements, the fulfilment of which makes the supplication effective in that Allah (awj) grants the supplicant’s request and elevates him to higher stations of proximity .to Himself

It is important to note that the acceptance of supplication does not mean that the request will be instantaneously granted, and that its consequences will become immediately manifest. Hence, in some cases, the result of the acceptance might (appear after some forty years, or in yet other cases Allah (awj

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١- Surat al-Baqarah (٢), Verse ٢٤٧: وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ

مَنْ يَشَآءُ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

may postpone the granting of the request for the hereafter, wherein He will bestow on the supplicant blessings many times greater than what he had asked for, and this experience will so overwhelm the blessed believer that at that moment he will wish .that none of his other requests had been granted in the world

Scholars of Islamic sciences have extracted from the Qur`an and the ahadith of the certain conditions which, if respected, will guarantee the acceptance of (ع) Infallibles the supplication. Mulla Muhsin Fayd Kashani enumerates ten such requirements. Ten other requirements have been recorded in 'Uddatul Da'i, while seventeen conditions .have been put forth in Du'aha Wa Tahlilat-i-Qur`an

By studying the various phrases that are recorded in the ahadith relating to this topic, it is possible to formulate the conditions that guarantee the acceptance of one's supplications, such as: not asking for a request that is in contradiction with the "best universal order" that governs the world; the immutable Divine will (in which case the supplication will be disregarded); beginning and ending the supplication with blessings possessing a thorough knowledge of ;(ع) upon Prophet Muhammad and his household Allah (awj), putting our trust only in Allah (awj) and no other but Him; being sincere and feeling desperately in need of Allah (awj); the harmoniousness of one's heart and tongue in supplicating; being disposed to carry out our duties and refrain from committing what Allah (awj) has forbidden; pleading for forgiveness of one's sins; (being persistent in beseeching Allah (awj

without loosing hope; knowing that Allah (awj) hears His servants and heeds their supplications; asking Allah (awj) to take care of one's needs the way He deems appropriate and in accordance with what is best for him, [not what he himself whimsically desires]. If all these conditions are met, the supplicant should have no .doubt that the request will be granted, although it be at a later time

Detailed Answer

Before venturing to answer the question, the meaning of du'a and the reason for its .necessity from the perspective of the Qur`an will be examined briefly

The necessity of supplication is not an issue confined to Islam; it was also a given among the religions of the ancient prophets, and thus they informed their people regarding this issue. Moreover, there are many instances where the supplications of supplication (ع) the ancient prophets have been recorded, one of which is Ibrahim's and its acceptance recounted in Surat Ibrahim, verse ۳۷. Another instance is Musa' supplication related in Surat Taha, verses ۲۵-۲۸. Allah (awj) in many verses exhorts the .(believers to supplicate Him (See, among others ۲:۱۸۶ and ۴۰:۶۰

The literal meaning of du'a (supplication) is "calling", "asking a request", and "pleading ".for help." Although in some contexts it denotes merely "calling

In its religious usage however, it refers to asking a favour from Allah, the Exalted. The word du'a and its derivatives that appear in the Qur`an hold approximately thirteen different meanings, some of which are: "calling", "supplicating", "asking Allah", "hollering for someone", "to invite to

.a cause or to someone”, “pleading for help”, “worship”, etc

From some verses and ahadith, it can be inferred that supplication is a form of worship of Allah (awj). Furthermore, in some ahadith, we come across phrases like “Supplication is the core of worship.” In this light, it becomes clear that supplication, .like all other forms of worship, has certain positive and negative conditions

In other words, in order for a supplication to be valid and complete and therefore conducive to Divine proximity, the supplicant must furnish certain prerequisites and conform to certain manners and pay heed to certain obstacles. It is after realizing these conditions that it becomes clear why some supplications are not accepted. For Allah (awj) is most wise and knowledgeable and, as such, all His actions are based on wise and reasonable grounds, and thus His granting a request is contingent on .whether or not it is conducive to the well-being of the supplicant

To better understand this; let us imagine a generous and benevolent individual who tells people that he will grant any request that is made to him. Now, if someone approaches him and asks him for something that is detrimental to the his own well-being or something that will entail his certain destruction—wrongly thinking that it is advantageous to him—in such a case, it is obvious that the appropriate response on the part of the generous and benevolent individual should be the rejection of the request. On the contrary, to grant the request in

question would be an act of oppression against the requester [in spite of the latter's feelings]. And it should be noted that most of the requests that human beings make to Allah (awj) are harmful for and disadvantageous to them.

This has been expressed in a sacred hadith; it reads, "There are those amongst My servants for whom only wealth is suitable [as opposed to poverty], and were I to consign them to anything else, they would have certainly perished. And indeed there are those amongst my servants for whom only poverty is suitable, and were I to consign them to anything else, they would have indeed perished."(١)

At this point, a question might arise in the reader's mind: Considering the fact that Allah (awj) knows what is good for us better than anyone else and that He will carry out what He wishes, so what need is there for supplication, to request something from Allah (awj)? In reply, it suffices to say that some of the Divine existential decrees (muqaddarat) are contingent on the supplication of the servant. That is, if the servant supplicates, that will be grounds on which the Divine will would allow the bestowal of the request, and if the servant does not supplicate, that ground would be lacking, and hence the request would not be granted.

For instance, if one beseeches Allah (awj) to grant him eternal life, Allah (awj) will not accept such supplication, for it contradicts the Divine will as made clear in

١ - al-Kafi, vol. ٢, pg. ٣۵٢: وَإِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَنْ لاَ يُصْلِحُهُ إِلاَّ الْغِنَى وَلَوْ صَرَّفْتُهُ إِلى غَيْرِ ذٰلِكَ لَهَلَكَ، وَإِنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَنْ لاَ يُصْلِحُهُ إِلاَّ الْفَقْرَ وَلَوْ صَرَّفْتُهُ إِلى غَيْرِ ذٰلِكَ لَهَلَكَ.

the Qur`an (٣:١٨٥); or if one asks Allah (awj) to prevent him from ever being in need of anyone else, such a request would also be denied. It has been narrated that one day overheard someone telling his friend, “May Allah never afflict (ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) you with any tribulation or mishap.” On hearing this, Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib addressed the person and said, “You just asked Allah for your friend’s death.” That is, .as long as one is alive, one will be afflicted with tribulations and hardships

In commenting on a hadith, ‘Allama Majlisi forwards some justifications as to why :some supplications are not accepted

Allah’s (awj) promise to grant the requests made to Him is conditioned on whether .١ they are in accord with His will, for Allah (awj) says, He will remove that for which you .(supplicated Him, if He wished (۶:۴١

What is meant by “replying” in the hadith is the concomitant meaning; that is, to .٢ hear the supplication of the servant. Allah (awj) accepts the supplication right away but postpones granting the supplicant’s request so that the latter would continue in his supplication, for the believer is the beloved of Allah (awj) and He loves to hear His .beloved

Allah (awj) grants only those requests that are to the advantage of the supplicant, .٣ for Allah (awj) is wise and as such does not jeopardize what is advantageous to His servant and conducive to his felicity in trying to meet the whimsical wishes

of His servant which are in actuality detrimental to his well-being. Thus it becomes clear that when such a promise (to grant the requests of those who beseech Him) is made by a wise being, it must be understood as to pertain only to those requests that are to the supplicant's advantage.(۱)

In Usul al-Kafi, four possibilities have been provided regarding the meaning of "reply" [i.e. Allah's reply to His servants' supplications]:(۲)

۱. Allah (awj) grants the supplicant's request right away;

۲. Allah (awj) accepts the supplicant's request but postpones granting it for some time, as He likes to hear the voice of the supplicant;

۳. Allah (awj) accepts the supplication but fulfils it not by granting what the supplicant had asked for but by erasing the supplicant's sins, placing it as compensation for his wrongs;

۴. Allah (awj) accepts the supplication but fulfils it not by granting what the supplicant had asked for but by reserving it for the supplicant as provision for the hereafter.

In some cases Allah's (awj) acceptance of the supplication is by way of bestowing on the supplicant several times more than what he had asked for in the hereafter as he was not aware of what was really in his good, and so when he beholds what bounties Allah (awj) has granted him in lieu of what he had asked for, he will wish that none of his requests had been granted and at that point he will confirm that his supplications have been fully accepted.(۳)

Up to here, the meaning

۱- Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. ۱۲ pg. ۱۹-۲۰

۲- al-Kafi, vol. ۱, pg. ۳۳۰

۳- Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. ۱۲ pg. ۱-۵

of du’a and its importance have been illustrated. The conditions of the acceptance of supplication and why some supplications are not accepted were also analyzed. Now it is time to consider the question: under what circumstances are supplications accepted? Scholars of Islam and Qur`anic exegetes have, based on their understanding of the Qur`an and the ahadith, enumerated certain conditions for the supplication and the supplicant, which if observed would render the supplication .effectual and thus the request would be granted

In Du’aha Wa Tahlilat-i Qur`an, the author mentions seventeen conditions for supplication and the manners according to which it should be carried out, some of which are: knowledge of Allah (awj); the concordance of the supplicant’s heart and tongue; carrying out the obligatory duties and refraining from the forbidden acts; repentance; uttering the formula of blessings upon the Prophet and his household, .etc

Mulla Muhsin Fayd Kashani also provides ten conditions in Mahajjah al-Bayda’, in addition to the ten that he quotes from Ahmad ibn Fahd al-Hilli’s ‘Uddatul Da’i. They are, among others: determination in supplication; supplicating as a group; supplicating with a real devotion of the heart [and not perfunctorily]; relying solely on .Allah (awj) in one’s needs, etc

In the ahadith regarding the guaranteed acceptance of supplications, there are some .phrases whose mention is not without benefit

says, “Supplications are always behind veils (ع) Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq that bar them from reaching the Divine Throne unless they are accompanied by (blessings to the Prophet and his household.”(١

It is narrated in

al-Kafi, vol. ٢, pg. ۴٩١ -١

said, “Whenever any of (ع) another account that Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq you decides to supplicate his Lord, he should commence it by blessing the Prophet, for such a blessing is accepted before Allah and certainly Allah is not such that He would (accept part of the supplication while rejecting the rest.”(١

And yet in another narration, it is recommended that the supplicant bless the Prophet .at the close of his supplication as well as at the commencement

says, “If a person is vigilant to prevent temptations (ع) Imam Hasan b. ‘Ali al-Mujtaba and thoughts that are displeasing to Allah from entering his heart, I will guarantee that he would be mustajab al-da’wah [i.e. that Allah will grant all his requests (indiscriminately].(٢

has been related as having said, “Sever all (ع) Imam Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq ties of hope from other-than-Allah until it [i.e. your hope] relies on no other power but (Allah, then supplicate, for then surely it will be accepted.”(٣

Also, it has been narrated that the supplication of the oppressed, who has no other .refuge but Allah (awj), is certainly accepted

Thus if the supplication is made in the tone of seeking help, the supplicant will not be repelled and his request will be granted. For, the Agent Who overlooks the affairs of the creatures and He Who grants the requests is perfect and beyond perfect, and His blessings are also perfect and beyond perfect, and so if the blessing is not manifest ,and does not affect the creatures

p: ٢٨٨

Amali, Shaykh Saduq, vol. ١, pg. ١٥٧ -١

al-Kafi, vol. ٢, pg. ۶٧ -٢

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٧٢, pg. ١٠٧ -٣

it is due to the defective capacity of the receptacle. Thus if the recipient be capable of receiving the blessings, which gush forth from an endless reservoir that never shows any sign of scarcity, the infinitely abundant and rich mines of Divine grace will pour .down on him

Hence, it has been said that human affairs are of three types: one type are those which are willed by Allah without any need for supplication, in which case whether or not the recipient supplicates, he will receive what has been allocated for him; the next type are those which will not be willed by Allah (awj) regardless of whether or not the individual supplicates, in which case even if the individual supplicates his request would not be granted; the third group are those which Allah (awj) wills, provided the beneficiary supplicates, and as such Allah (awj) will not will it without the beneficiary's .supplication

In the latter case, Allah's (awj) granting the request is contingent on the supplication of the beneficiary, and as the human being is ignorant of the advantageousness or disadvantageousness of what he desires, he must not fail to supplicate for all he wants. Although, he must not be disappointed if it is not granted, for he should know .that it was not to his benefit

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, supplication is a form of worship, rather it is of the best forms of worship, and as such, is very effective in gaining proximity to Allah (awj), which is

of the most valuable achievements that can be sought through worship [and thus the supplicant should not be so much concerned as to whether his request is granted or .[not

After raising one's hands in supplication, it is recommended, according to the ahadith that he rub his hands on his face, for Allah's ,(ع) and the traditions of the Infallibles (awj) grace has replied to those hands [although it might appear that the supplicant's request has not been granted]. The hands which have been extended toward Allah (awj) in supplication will definitely be blessed and so the supplicant will not terminate his supplication empty handed, and the hands that have been blessed by Allah (awj) .are sacred. Thus, it is recommended that the supplicant rub his hands on his face

Question ۳۹: Sin: Reality, effect on Soul and Psyche

point

Question: What is the reality of sin and how does it affect the soul and psyche of the ?human being

Sin—the 'Arabic equivalents of which are ithm and 'isyan—signifies disobeying the injunctions of the Lord and the failure to comply with His wishes. In other words, the committing of an action which is displeasing to the Lord, the Creator, (due to the harm it entails) or to avoid an action that has been obligated by Him (due to the benefit it .entails). Hence, sin is contradictory to the spirit of obedience

In essence, the sinner has deposed the rightful king of his faculties—in wit, reason—and has supplanted it with desire and anger, which should be in the service of reason. When desire

and anger have taken power as the rulers of the soul, they will be the sinner's beloved. Thus, whatever, he wishes to do must be pleasing either to desire or to .anger, and it is for this reason that he commits sin

Brief Answer

point

.The above question must be answered in four parts

The Reality of Sin

Sin, which in 'Arabic is referred to as ithm and 'isyan, means to disobey the order of the Master and to slip in complying with His wishes. The sinful individual, in lieu of following the dictates of reason, obeys his desire and anger, which means that he may commit any sin imaginable, which if he does, he has actually betrayed himself. Sin is the snare of Satan. The inner reality of sin is fire while on the outside it deceives the individual by a fleeting sense of pleasure and lust, in temptation of which the .oblivious human being incurs Divine chastisement

The Effects of Sin

Sin entails harmful consequences for the individual as well as for society at large. Its consequences for the individual are, among others: the darkening and hardening of one's heart; depriving the sinner of knowledge of the Divine secrets and gnosis; the transformation of the heart into a niche for Satan; being barred from self-knowledge; relinquishing the pleasure of Divine conversation; the invalidation of the sinner's worship; leading the sinner to denying the hereafter and Allah's (awj) reward and .punishment

The social repercussions of sin consist of the decadence and retrogression of the sinful society, although it might appear as though it

is headed in the direction of progress. For, in reality, such a society is drawing near to .its extinction due to neglecting human and moral values

The Cause of Sin

Religious authorities arraign ignorance and obliviousness as the main causes for sin. The most effective tactic of an enemy and its first means of infiltration is to distract its opposing party. Ignorance is the fountainhead of corruption—ignorance of the existential values of humanity, of the valuable results of sexual purity ('iffah), of the .effects of sin, etc

The Way of Salvation

:Several ways can be enumerated here

١. Repentance (which is returning to Allah (awj) with the resolute intention of abstaining from sin and which encompasses a multitude of grades) and pleading for .forgiveness

٢. Reminding oneself of one's sins.

٣. The remembrance of Allah (awj).

۴. A resolved will [to remain on the straight path].

Thus, after the clarification of the meaning of sin and the other related issues, attributing sin to Allah (awj) becomes meaningless. The issues of guidance, being led astray, and the variations in the natures of human beings in creation will be dealt with .separately

Detailed Answer

Sin: The Snare of Satan

In the ahadith related from the Ahlul Bayt (ع), material attachments and sins are described as snares of Satan. That is, sins are traps with which Satan hunts human beings and ropes with which he enthrals them. Of course these ropes are

multitudinous, colourful, and come in different sizes. Satan lures every person in a special way. Some he entraps with wealth, some with positions of power, and others .by exploiting their sexual drive

The flames

p: ۲۹۲

of Hell are intertwined with sinful and lustful pleasures; that is, the interior of the snare is fire and the exterior is pleasure, and the human being falls in the trap in the (vain attempt to reach the apparent pleasures.(١)

The Consequences of Sin

The consequences of sin can be divided into those that befall the individual and those that pertain to society. The consequences of sin for the individual are:

١. It contaminates and pollutes the soul. The sinner neither enjoys a beneficial sleep in which he would attain any knowledge in the form of a truthful dream, neither does he acquire any gnosis in his waking life, nor does he find the opportunity to benefit others by teaching them something useful to them. Therefore, if the soul—the soul which Allah (awj) designated as the recipient of Divine revelation and by which He swears in His book—is darkened, many secrets would be withheld from it. If it is said that the spiritual journeyer should be reticent and careful of what he eats, it is so that he would be able to hear the Divine afflatus, for if one desires to hear the inner voice, he must himself keep quiet.

٢. When one pledges allegiance to Satan, submitting to his temptations, his heart gradually metamorphoses into the dwelling of Satan, becoming his host; and this is a reality expressed by the Qur`an.(٢) The heart of a liar is the abode of Satan. But he who is honest in his knowledge and is also faithful in the

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١- Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon ١٧۶: ...إِنَّ النَّارَ حُفَّتْ بِالشَّهَوَاتِ...

٢- Surat al-Shu'ara' (٢۶), Verse ٢٢١-٢٢٢: ﴿ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلَى مَنْ تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيَاطِينُ. تَنَزَّلُ عَلَى كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴾

financial trusts that are made to him, the heart of such an individual is too pure to host Satan.

۳. Sin is a veil that prevents self-knowledge. The human being forgets Allah (awj) as a result of his sins and this forgetting of Allah (awj) obstructs the acquisition of self-knowledge.(۱) When one capitulates to corruption, he has forfeited his life eternally and has enthralled himself, after which nothing, not even the flames of Hell, can emancipate, for although fire has the potency to melt metal, but if the metal is fiery, that is to say if it is fire solidified, then nothing can melt it.

۴. Another entailment of sin is that the sinner is deprived from enjoying the pleasures of worship, and so he always wishes that he could enjoy his worship, but due to his sins and hardheartedness, he has extirpated the capacity of his heart [for such spiritual joys]. Shaykh as-Saduq narrates in his valuable work al-Tawhid that the eighth Imam, 'Ali b. Musa al-Rida (ع) was on one occasion asked, "Why is Allah veiled?" in whose response, the Imam said, "He is not veiled. That you do not see Him is due to the excess of your sins, which like a veil, blinds your heart to witnessing [Allah]."(۲)

۵. In the corpus of ahadith, the topic of the veiling of sins is abundantly treated. For instance, in one hadith, the Prophet (ص) is narrated as having said, "When one commits a sin, a black speck appears on

p: ۲۹۴

۱- Surat al-Mujadilah (۵۸), Verse ۱۹: ﴿ إِسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ أُوْلَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ الشَّيْطَانِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ الشَّيْطَانِ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴾

۲- al-Tawhid, pg. ۲۵۲: ... إِنَّ الإِحْتِجَابَ عَنِ الْخَلْقِ لِكَثْرَةِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ« فَأَمَّا هُوَ فَلَا يُخْفَى عَلَيْهِ خَافِيَةٌ فِى آنَاءِ اللَّيْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ.

his heart. If he disowns it and repents, his heart will be purified. But if he repeats the sin, the spot spreads, until it overtakes the entire heart."(۱)

۶. In another hadith, he is recorded as having said, "The excess of sins destroys the heart."

۷. Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) says, "There is nothing more destructive to the heart than sin. Sin affects the heart and eventually overwhelms it."(۲)

۸. Another hadith related from the latter reads, "I advise you to be pious, to abstain from sin, and to be diligent in the course of worship. Be aware; worship without abstaining from sin is sterile."(۳)

۹. A Prophetic hadith addressed to Abu Dharr reads, "O Abu Dharr, the crux of religion is abstaining from sin and the secret of religion is obedience to Allah. Beware that should you pray to the extent that your back bends like a bow and fast until you are as thin as an arrow—such worship would not avail you unless it is coupled with abstaining from sin. O Abu Dharr, those who have relinquished the forbidden pleasures of this world and have taken up ascetic lives, they are indeed the friends of Allah."(۴)

۱۰. The Denial of the Hereafter. Sin obstructs the knowledge of the hereafter from taking effect. That is, it is possible that one be certain of the hereafter, but that certainty be buried under multitudinous layers of lustful pollutions, such as that would render that certainty futile.(۵)

In

۱- Tafsir al-Qurtubi, vol. ۱۹, pg. ۲۵۹: عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ص) قَالَ: إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا أَخْطَأَ خَطِيئَةً نَكَتَتْ فِى قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَهٌ سَوْدَاءُ، فَإِذَا هُوَ نَزَعَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ اللهَ وَتَابَ، صُقِلَ قَلْبُهُ، فَإِنْ عَادَ زِيْدَ فِيهاَ، حَتّى تَعْلُوْ على قَلْبِهِ.

۲- al-Kafi, vol. ۲, pg. ۲۶۸ and pg. ۲۷۱: عَنْ أَبِى عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: كَانَ أَبِى (ع) يَقُولُ: مَا مِنْ شَىْءٍ أَفْسَدُ لِلْقَلْبِ مِنْ خَطِيئَهٍ، إِنَّ الْقَلْبَ لَيُوَاقِعُ الْخَطِيْئَهَ فَمَا تَزَالُ بِهِ حَتّى تَغْلِبُ عَلَيْهِ فَيَصِيْرُ أَعْلَاهُ أَسْفَلَهُ.

۳ - al-Kafi, vol. ۲, pg. ۷۸: قُلْتُ لِأَبِی عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) أَوْصِنِی، قَالَ أُوصِیکَ بِتَقْوی اللَّهِ وَالْوَرَعِ وَالِاجْتِهَادِ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا یَنْفَعُ اجْتِهَادٌ لَا وَرَعَ فِیهِ.

۴ - Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۷۴, pg. ۸۶-۸۷: یَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ أَصْلُ الدِّینِ الْوَرَعُ وَ رَأْسُهُ الطَّاعَهُ یَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ کُنْ وَرِعاً تَکُنْ أَعْبَدَ النَّاسِ وَ خَیْرُ دِینِکُمُ الْوَرَعُ یَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ فَضْلُ الْعِلْمِ خَیْرٌ مِنْ فَضْلِ الْعِبَادَهِ وَ اعْلَمْ أَنَّکُمْ لَوْ صَلَّیْتُمْ حَتَّی تَکُونُوا کَالْحَنَایَا وَ صُمْتُمْ حَتَّی تَکُونُوا کَالْأَوْتَارِ مَا یَنْفَعُکُمْ ذَلِکَ إِلَّا بِوَرَعٍ یَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ إِنَّ أَهْلَ الْوَرَعِ وَ الزُّهْدِ فِی الدُّنْیَا هُمْ أَوْلِیَاءُ اللَّهِ حَقّا

۵ - Surat al-Jathiyah (۴۵), Verse ۲۳: ﴿ أَفَرَأَیْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَی عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَی سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلَی بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَهً فَمَنْ یَهْدِیهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَکَّرُونَ ﴾

Surat al-Mutaffifin, the Qur`an mentions those who utterly deny the hereafter, then it says, “Woe to deniers on that day, who deny the day of retribution; and none denies it ,except every sinful transgressor. When Our signs are recited to him, he says

Myths of the ancients.’ No indeed their hearts have been sullied by what they have‘ ”(been earning.(۱

It can be clearly inferred from these verses that sin ruins the lustre of the heart, such that spiritual truths are not reflected in that originally Divine mirror. Otherwise, the signs of the Truth, especially in regard to the Origin and the Destination are clear and .obvious

The Social Effects of Sin

Sin leads to social decadence and the increase of crime. It hinders even the activities of the effective individuals of society due to the far-reaching consequences of sin, .thus obstructing the progress of that society

The Cause of Sin: Ignorance and Obliviousness

The most effective of weapons of an enemy and the quickest way for the enemy to infiltrate is by heedlessness. If Satan succeeds in making human being heedless, then there is no need for him to make the extra effort of deceiving the human being by compound ignorance. If by Satan’s temptations, the righteous thought is effaced from one’s mind, Satan will be at ease. Ignorance is the fountainhead of the spreading of .corruption

illustrate that sinful love and sexual (ع) The verses pertaining to the story of Yusuf perversion stem from ignorance: ignorance of the existential values of humanity, of ,the valuable results of sexual purity and moderation

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۱- Surat al-Mutaffifin (۸۳), Verses ۱۰-۱۴: ﴿ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ الَّذِينَ يُكَذِّبُونَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ. وَمَا يُكَذِّبُ بِهِ إِلَّا كُلُّ مُعْتَدٍ أَثِيمٍ. إِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الأَوَّلِينَ. كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴾

.(of the repercussions of sin and ultimately ignorance of the injunctions of Allah (awj

The Way of Redemption from Sin

:Several methods may be mentioned for extrication from sin

Repentance and pleading for forgiveness. Tawbah (repentance) literally means "to .۱ return." When a servant returns to his master, it is said that he has done tawbah. The Most Sacred Essence in the Qur`an exhorts all believers to repent.

.Remembering One's Sins .۲

.(The Remembrance of Allah (awj .۳

.The Human Will Factor .۴

Question ۴۰: Kiramah (Magnanimity): Stations and Meanings

point

Question: What is magnanimity (kiramah)? How can we become magnanimous? In ?Allah's (awj) view, what stations do the magnanimous hold

Magnanimity means to be far away from lowliness. The soul of he who is pure from every low attribute is called magnanimous. Magnanimity is opposed to lowliness. To reach the highest peak of magnanimity, one must be equipped with piety, which is .staying away from anything that leads to sin

has said, "He who is pious (ع) As the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib will achieve what he desires and Allah will make him to dwell in the house of magnanimity; the house that is Allah's alone. Its ceiling is the Throne of The Lord; its brightness comes from Divine Beauty; angels and the friends and companions of ".prophets frequent this house

Brief Answer

Detailed Answer

point

Magnanimity means to be far away from lowliness. The soul of he who is pure from every low attribute is called magnanimous. Lowliness stands in opposition to .magnanimity

Magnanimity from the Infallibles' Viewpoint

The Almighty Allah is magnanimous" ,(ص) According to a saying of the Noble Prophet and he likes

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magnanimity."(۱)

As Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) has said:

۱. "He who gives before he is asked to is magnanimous."(۲)

۲. "The troubling times do not have an effect on the magnanimous person's soul."(۳)

۳. "The magnanimous person is he who stays away from what is forbidden of him and is free from all faults."(۴)

۴. "The magnanimous person is disgusted with every thing that the low person takes pride in."(۵)

۵. "The magnanimous person is he who uses his wealth to protect his honour but the low person protects his wealth with his honour."(۶)

۶. "The person who fathoms the magnanimity and grandeur of the human spirit comes to see the entire world and all that is in it as being of little worth and consequence."(۷)

The opposition between magnanimity and lowliness has been clearly demonstrated by traditions of the noble Imams (ع). Magnanimity is an ethical value. It is one of the names of Allah (awj). In contrast, everything that distances man from Allah (awj) has its roots in lowliness. As the Noble prophet (ص) has said, "The love of the world is the root of every sin and the start of every transgression."(۸) The world has been named dunya because it is lesser than everything.(۹)

When we pay attention to the fact that lowliness is in opposition to magnanimity and because the words dani, dina'at, and dunya are etymologically from the same root (d-n-y, "to be low"), we cannot seek magnanimity in the love of the world. This is because, as Imam

۱- Muntakhab Mizan al-Hikmah, no. ۵۴۹۳: عَنْ رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ (ص): إِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَرِی_مٌ يُحِبُّ الْكَرَمَ.

۲- Ghurar al-Hikam, no. ۱۳۸۹: عَنِ الإِمَامِ عَلِيٍّ (ع): أَلْكَرِی_مُ مَنْ سَبَقَ نَوَالُهُ سُؤَالَهُ.

۳- Ibid., no. ۱۵۵۵: اَلنَّفْسُ الْکَرِی_مَهُ لاَ تُؤَثِّرُ فِیهِ الْنَکَباتُ.

۴- Ibid., no. ۱۵۶۵: اَلْکَرِی_مُ مَنْ تَجَنَّبَ الْمَحارِمَ وَ تَنَ_زَّهَ عَنِ الْعُیُوبِ.

۵- Ibid. no. ۱۷۷۱: أَلْکَرِی_مُ یزدجر عما یفتخر بِهِ الْلَئِیمُ.

۶- Ibid. no ۲۱۵۹: اَلْکَرِی_مُ مَنْ صَانَ عِرْضَهُ بِمَالِهِ، وَ اللَّئِیمُ مَنْ صَانَ مَالَهُ بِعِرْضِهِ.

۷- Ibid. no. ۹۱۳۰: مَنْ کَرُمَتْ نَفْسَهُ صَغُرَتِ الدُّنْیا فی عَیْنِهِ.

۸- Ibid., no. ۲۱۹۴: حُبُّ الدُّنْیا أَصْلُ کُلِّ مَعْصِیَهٍ وَ أَوَّلُ کُلِّ ذَنْبٍ.

۹- Ibid., no. ۲۱۲۱: إِنَّمَا سُمِّیَتِ الدُّنْیا دُنْیاً لأَنَّهَا أَدْنَ_ی مِنْ کُلِّ شَیْءٍ...

has said, “The world makes man abased,”(۱) and magnanimity (ع) Ali b. Abi Talib‘ .stands in opposition to abasement

In order to reach the peaks of magnanimity we must arm ourselves with the weapons of piety and stay away from every kind of worldliness. As the Commander of the has said, “Magnanimity cannot come into (ع) Faithful, Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (existence without piety.”(۲

(Allah (awj) says, “The most honourable amongst you with Allah is the most pious.”(۳

says, “Honour is piety.”(۴) He has also stated, “Piety means to (ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (stay away from everything that causes one to sin.”(۵

He has also said, “Certainly fear of Allah is the medicine for your hearts; sight for the blindness of your spirits; the cure for the ailments of your bodies; the rectifier of the evils of your breasts; the purifier of the pollution of your minds; the light of the darkness of your eyes; the consolation for the fear of your hearts and the brightness for the gloom of your ignorance. Therefore, make obedience to Allah the way of your .life and not only your outside covering

Make it your inner habit instead of only an outer routine, subtle enough to enter your ribs through your heart; the guide for all your affairs; the watering place (on the Day of Judgment); the intercessor for the achievement of our aims; asylum for the day of your fears; the lamp of the interior of your graves; the company of your loneliness and deliverance

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۱- Ibid., no. ۲۱۹۲: الدُّنْيَا تَذِلُّ.

۲- Nahjul Balaghah, short saying no. ۱۱۳: لَا كَرَمَ كَالتَّقْوى.

۳- Surat al-Hujurat (۴۹), Verse ۱۳:

۴- ﴿ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ. إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴾ Ghurar al-Hikam, no. ۶۶۶۴: لَا عِزَّ كَالطَّاعَةِ.

۵- Ibid., no. ۶۶۸۳: التَّقْوى أَنْ يَتَّقِيَ الْمَرْءُ كُلَّمَا يُؤْثِمُهُ.

.from the troubles of your abodes

Certainly, obedience to Allah is a protection against encircling calamities, expected dangers and the flames of burning fires. Therefore, whoever has fear of Allah, troubles remain away from him after having been near, affairs become sweet after their bitterness, waves (of trouble) recede from him after having crowded over him, difficulties become easy for him after occurring, generosity rains fast over him after there had been famine, mercy bends over him after it had been loath, the favours of Allah spring forth on him after they been dried and blessings descend over him in (showers after being scarce."(١)

The Noble Qur`an introduces man's spirit as a noble being. If man becomes noble, he has transcended his natural being and found his original kernel. Because obedience to Allah (awj) is in accordance with the kernel of man, disobedience and sin are secondary to him. Honour however is not like this, because it is in the nature of man. ,Allah (awj) says

(We honoured man."(٢)"

If man was created just from dust, honour and magnanimity would not be essential to him. Man however has both a principal and a secondary nature. His secondary nature .returns to dust and his essence is related to Allah

In the Noble Qur`an, Allah (awj) attributes the spirit to himself and the body to the earth.(٣) He doesn't say I created man from dust and an immaterial spirit. Rather He says, I created man from dust then blew of My Spirit into him. Because

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١ - Nahjul Balaghah, Sermon ١٩٢: ...فَإِنَّ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ دَوَاءُ دَاءِ قُلُوبِكُمْ وَ بَصَرُ عَمَى أَفْئِدَتِكُمْ وَ شِفَاءُ مَرَضِ أَجْسَادِكُمْ وَ صَلَاحُ فَسَادِ صُدُورِكُمْ وَ طُهُورُ دَنَسِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ وَ جِلَاءُ عَشَا أَبْصَارِكُمْ وَ أَمْنُ فَزَعِ جَأْشِكُمْ وَ ضِيَاءُ سَوَادِ ظُلْمَتِكُمْ فَاجْعَلُوا طَاعَةَ اللَّهِ شِعَاراً دُونَ دِثَارِكُمْ وَ دَخِيلًا دُونَ شِعَارِكُمْ وَ لَطِيفاً بَيْنَ أَضْلَاعِكُمْ وَ أَمِيراً فَوْقَ أُمُورِكُمْ وَ مَنْهَلًا لِحِينِ وُرُودِكُمْ وَ شَفِيعاً لِدَرَكِ طَلِبَتِكُمْ وَ جُنَّةً لِيَوْمِ فَزَعِكُمْ وَ مَصَابِيحَ لِبُطُونِ قُبُورِكُمْ وَ سَكَناً لِطُولِ وَحْشَتِكُمْ وَ نَفَساً لِكَرْبِ مَوَاطِنِكُمْ فَإِنَّ طَاعَةَ اللَّهِ حِرْزٌ مِنْ مَتَالِفَ مُكْتَنِفَةٍ وَ مَخَاوِفَ مُتَوَقَّعَةٍ وَ أُوَارِ نِيرَانٍ مُوقَدَةٍ فَمَنْ أَخَذَ بِالتَّقْوَى عَزَبَتْ عَنْهُ الشَّدَائِدُ بَعْدَ دُنُوِّهَا وَ احْلَوْلَتْ لَهُ الْأُمُورُ بَعْدَ

مَرَارَتِهَا وَ انْفَرَجَتْ عَنْهُ الْأَمْوَاجُ بَعْدَ تَرَاكُمِهَا وَ أَسْهَلَتْ لَهُ الصِّعَابُ بَعْدَ إِنْصَابِهَا وَ هَطَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ الْكَرَامَةُ بَعْدَ قُحُوطِهَا. وَ تَحَدَّبَتْ عَلَيْهِ الرَّحْمَةُ بَعْدَ نُفُورِهَا وَ تَفَجَّرَتْ عَلَيْهِ النِّعَمُ بَعْدَ نُضُوبِهَا وَ وَبَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ الْبَرَكَةُ بَعْدَ إِرْذَاذِهَا...

٢- ﴿ :Surat al-Isra` (١٧), Verse ٧٠ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ... ﴾

٣- ﴿ :Surat Sad (٣٨), Verses ٧١-٧٢ إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِنْ طِينٍ. فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي... ﴾

man's spirit pertains to the Allah the all-Noble and the all-Honourable, it therefore has a portion of honour. Thus the Spirit of Allah (awj) is no different from the spirit of .nobility

has said, "Allah has enjoined you to piety. He made the it the (ع) As Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib extent of His happiness and His wish from His servants. Therefore, fear Allah in whose presence you stand and in whose hand is your will, and who sees all your actions and movements. If you hide something, He knows it, and if you show it He will record it. He uses honourable angels to record your actions. Neither do they forget to record what deserves to be written nor do they record what does not exist. You should remember that he who takes up piety, frees himself from mischief, flees darkness by means of the light of guidance, Allah places him in the way station of honour, the house that is reserved for Allah. Its roof is the throne of Allah. Its light is the illumination of Allah's Greatness. Its pilgrims and friends are the angels and its inhabitants are the Divine (Prophets."(۱

Question ۴۱: Pure Wine in the Qur'an

point

Question: What is the "sharaban tahuran" mentioned in the Qur`an (sometimes ?("translated as "pure wine

Sharab" means something which can be drunk. It has been used in the Qur`an with" .this meaning

(Many fruits and drinks are at their disposal."(۲"

,Allah (awj) also says

(He sends down water from the sky from which you drink."(۳"

The word

۱ - Nahjul Balaghah, sermon ۱۸۳: ...وَ أَوْصَاكُمْ بِالتَّقْوَى وَ جَعَلَهَا مُنْتَهَى رِضَاهُ وَ حَاجَتَهُ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِی أَنْتُمْ بِعَيْنِهِ وَ نَوَاصِيكُمْ بِيَدِهِ وَ تَقَلُّبُكُمْ فِی قَبْضَتِهِ إِنْ أَسْرَرْتُمْ عَلِمَهُ وَ إِنْ أَعْلَنْتُمْ كَتَبَهُ قَدْ وَكَّلَ بِذَلِكَ حَفَظَةً كِرَاماً لَا يُسْقِطُونَ حَقّاً وَ لَا يُثْبِتُونَ بَاطِلًا وَ اعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجاً مِنَ الْفِتَنِ وَ نُوراً مِنَ الظُّلَمِ وَ يُخَلِّدْهُ فِيمَا اشْتَهَتْ نَفْسُهُ وَ يُنْزِلْهُ مَنْزِلَ الْكَرَامَهِ عِنْدَهُ فِی دَارٍ اصْطَنَعَهَا لِنَفْسِهِ ظِلُّهَا عَرْشُهُ وَ نُورُهَا بَهْجَتُهُ وَ زُوَّارُهَا مَلَائِكَتُهُ وَ رُفَقَاؤُهَا رُسُلُه...

۲ - Surat Sad (۳۸), Verse ۵۱: ... يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِفَاكِهَهٍ كَثِيرَهٍ وَشَرَابٍ

۳ - Surat al-Nahl (۱۶), Verse ۱۰: هُوَ الَّذِی أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ

Tahur" means that which is in itself pure and uncontaminated and which also makes "other things pure, just as He says in the Qur`an,

"We sent down purifying water from heaven."(1)

We can gather from various verses that in heaven there are various kinds of drinks that are pure(2) and refreshing. The liquids that flow in the riverbeds of heaven differ from the drinks of this world not only in their substance but also in their qualities. This is because the rivers of this world only flow with water and after a while their water becomes rancid. But the rivers of heaven are special in both regards.

The Noble Qur`an points to four kinds of liquid that flow in four different riverbeds in heaven: the river of water that quenches thirst; the river of milk that satiates hunger; the river of honey that gives pleasure and strength; and the river of wine for happiness.(3) These liquids have been created in such a way that the passing of time does not corrupt them. In other verses an indication is made to a drink called "Rahiq Makhtum"(4) or that which is mixed with camphor(5) or zanjabil(6). In one verse mention is made of a pure drink(7) that the Lord will give; the saqi, or cupbearer, being Allah (awj) himself.

We can summarize the viewpoints of Qur`anic commentators regarding the special "wine" of heaven into three basic views:

1. The meaning of "pure drink" is a type of drink which the people of heaven drink

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1- Surat al-Furqan (25), Verse 48: ﴿ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً طَهُوراً ﴾

2- This apparently does not refer to the legal sense of purity {i.e. haharah opposite to nijasah}, because there cannot be filth or nijasah in paradise. There are only different levels of perfection.

3- Surat Muhammad (47), Verse 15: ﴿ مَثَلُ الْجَنَّهِ الَّتِى وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَآءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرْ طَعْمُهُ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّهٍ لِلشَّارِبِـينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى ... ﴾

4- Surat al-Mutaffifin (83), Verse 25: ﴿ يُسْقَوْنَ مِنْ رَحِيقٍ مَخْـتُومٍ ﴾

٥- Surat al-Insan (٧٦), Verse ٥: ﴿ إِنَّ الأبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا ﴾

٦- Surat al-Insan (٧٦), Verse ١٧: ﴿ وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلاً ﴾

٧- Ibid., Verse ٢١: ﴿ وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا ﴾

after eating heavenly food. It cleans all inner wastes. Only perspiration is excreted by the body which gives off a beautiful fragrance. This is a materialistic interpretation of the blessings of heaven with the difference that what is found there is better and more long-lasting than what is found here. The traditions(١) and verses of the Qur`an have described the drinks of heaven in the most beautiful of ways with the most extraordinary cupbearers who revolve around the people of heaven and give them an intensely white drink in which there is no corruption of the mind and by which they do (not become inebriated.(٢

The meaning behind the aforementioned drink is spiritual blessings. In the Qur`anic .٢ commentary, al-Mizan, there are indications that this "pure drink" cleans one spiritually from forgetfulness of Allah (awj) and removes the curtains and barriers .between us and Him

When the believer drinks" ,(ع) As narrated from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq the 'pure drink' he forgets everything other than Allah and turns solely towards his Master."(٣) In the Qur`anic commentary, Ayab al-Bayan, it is written that the "pure drink" cleans the hearts of the good from evil attributes and bad ethical traits and .from the imaginary desires and from all sadness and misery

he mentions that "When the ,(ع) In a narration from Imam Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Baqir (believers drink from it Allah cleans their hearts from envy."(٤

Some great personalities have said that since drawing ourselves in the love of Allah (awj) and

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١- One example is hadith no. ٣٠ in Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. ٥, pp. ٣٢-٣٣.

٢- Surat al-Saffat (٣٧), Verses ٤٥-٤٧: ﴿ يُطَـــافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ. بَيْضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ. لَا فِيهَا غَوْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنْـزَفُونَ ﴾ Also see Surat al-Zukhruf (٤٣), Verse ٧

٣- Majma' al-Bayan, vol. ١٠, pg. ٢٢٣: يُطَهِّرُهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سِوَى اللَّهَ.

٤- al-Kafi, vol. ٨, pg. ٩٦: ...وَ عَنْ يَمِينِ الشَّجَرَةِ عَيْنٌ مُطَهِّرَةٌ مُزَكِّيَةٌ قَالَ فَيَسْقَوْنَ مِنْهَا شَرْبَةً فَيُطَهِّرُ اللَّهُ بِهَا قُلُوبَهُمْ مِنَ الْحَسَدِ...

cutting off all ties from other than Allah (awj) is the ultimate purity, everything which lacks that, lacks the quality of purity. This is a general principle and is one of the pearls Its message has been communicated .(ع) of wisdom of the noble family of the Prophet when he said: "This drink cleans their (ع) by Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq bodies and their souls from other than that Pure Essence. It is only That Noble (Essence of Allah and His remembrance that cleans man from impurities."(١)

It can be gathered from some Qur`anic commentaries that they have attempted to .٣ combine the above two viewpoints. They say that since man is a combination of lowly mud and the Spirit of Allah (awj), he needs not only material sustenance but also .spiritual blessings

Just as the spiritual wayfaring of people differs, so do the rewards they receive in heaven. Some like the good taste of the refreshing drink of "Rahiq Makhtum" and are satiated by it. It is a drink which has been sealed with the musk of immaculateness .from falsehood

The drink of those drawn near (muqarrabin) is the water of tasnim. In a tradition from it has been stated that "Tasnim is the most ,(ع) Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq blessed of drinks in heaven, from which Muhammad and his Noble Progeny drink. The rest of the people of heaven drink from a mixture of that."(٢) The cupbearer of that drink is Allah (awj) Himself(٣) and the chalice

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١- Majma' al-Bayan, vol. ١٠, pg. ٢٢٣: يُطَهِّرُهُمْ عَنْ كُلِّ شَیْءٍ سِوَی اللَّهِ، إذْ لاَ طاَهِرَ مِنْ تَدَنُّسٍ بِشَیْءٍ مِنَ الأَكْوَانِ، إلاَّ الله.

٢- Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨, pg. ١۵٠: اَلتَّسْنِيمُ أَشْرَفُ شَرَابٍ فِی الْجَنَّهِ يَشْرَبُهُ مُحَمَّدٌ وَآلُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَرْفاً، وَيُمْزَجُ لِأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ وَسَائِرِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّهِ.

٣- Surat al-Insan (٧۶), Verse ٢١: ﴿... وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا﴾

(will be the truth of knowledge and love towards Him.(١

From what we have said, we can understand that just as in this world people differ in their degrees of perfection; in heaven they also have different degrees of perfection. Their share of the blessings of paradise is equivalent to their spiritual capacity. That is why they have been called by different names in the Noble Qur`an. What is certain is that the blessings of heaven are filled with pleasure and happiness, but not exactly .like the pleasures of this world

Brief Answer

Sharab" means something which can be drunk and "tahur" means that which is in" itself pure and uncontaminated and also makes other things pure. We can gather from various verses that in heaven there are various kinds of drinks that are pure and :refreshing. The term "Sharaban Tahuran" has been mentioned in one of these verses

(Their Lord will serve them with the pure drink."(٢"

:There are three views as to what this drink is

Some have said this drink is what believers will drink in paradise after having eaten .١ heavenly foods. This drink will clear all internal wastes. The only thing left will appear .in the form of a fragrant perspiration on the skin

Others have taken this drink to be spiritual blessings for spiritual progress. As . ٢ When the believer drinks the" ,(ع) narrated from Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq 'pure drink' he forgets everything other than Allah and turns solely towards his ".Master

.A narration from Imam Muhammad b

١- ﴿ :Surat al-Mutaffifin (٨٣), Verses ٢٧-٢٨ وَمِزَاجُهُ مِنْ تَسْنِيمٍ. عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴾

٢- ﴿ :Surat al-Insan (٧١), Verse ٢١ ...وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُوراً... ﴾

says “When the believers drink from it Allah cleans their hearts from (ع) Ali al-Baqir‘ ”.envy

A third group has combined the previous two opinions. They have said that since .۳ man is a beautiful combination of the dark soil and a divine soul, he needs not only .material sustenance but also spiritual blessings

Just as the spiritual wayfaring of people differs so too does the rewards they receive in heaven. In some verses of the Noble Qur`an the drinks in paradise have been mentioned in very beautiful phrases: the most beautiful cup-bearers; tall with pretty faces and deep-set eyes, going around with chalices of a pure drink amongst the believers in heaven; a very clear drink that gives them an indescribable feeling. This drink does not demolish the intellect, nor do they become intoxicated and drunk with .it

Other verses relate that the “abrar” will drink from a refreshing drink called “rahiq makhtum.” This drink has a scented seal on it which keeps it from any type of .contamination

The “muqarrabuun’s” share will be from the spring called “tasnim.” The cup-bearer will be the Lord himself and the chalice will be the truth of knowledge and love .towards Him

that he said “Tasnim is the noblest (ص) There is a narration from the Noble Prophet and his progeny will drink and the Ashab (ص) drink in paradise which Muhammad ”.Yamin and the rest will drink from a mixture that contains some of it

Thus, as people are of different levels in

this world, they will be in different levels in paradise as well. What they enjoy from paradise will be according to their spiritual capacity. This is why the Noble Qur`an mentions them with different terms calling a group "ashab yamin" others "abrar" and .some "muqarrabun." Their rewards will also be according to their ranks

Detailed Answer

Question ۴۲: Pre-requisites for understanding the Qur'an

point

?Question: What are the prerequisites for understanding the Qur`an

is the (ص) Among the basic tenants of Islam is the belief that the Prophet Muhammad final prophet and his religion is the final religion. It follows that the Qur`an must accompany man until the Day of Judgment providing him with guidance. Thus, after there is no excuse left to those who wish to flee ,(ص) the prophethood of Muhammad .(from their duty toward Allah (awj

On the one hand, this book describes itself as "light"(۱), "clear"(۲), "a clarifier"(۳), and "a proof."(۴) It claims with emphasis that it is easy to understand and easy to benefit from.(۵) On the other hand, the Qur`an repeatedly calls its readership to ponder and criticises those who fail to do so.(۶) Our challenge is to find the harmony between .these two sets of verses

The Qur`an is "light" because it originates with the One who is the Light of the Heavens and Earth.(۷) It therefore, is not only luminous, but it illuminates other than itself. It follows that it is "clear" and evident to all. It is a "clarifier" because it also clarifies all that is external to itself. It is a

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۱- □ :Surat al-Taghabun (۶۴), Verse ۸ فَئَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَ النُّورِ الَّذِی أَنْزَلْنَا □

۲- □ :Surat Yasin (۳۶), Verse ۶۹ إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ ذِکْرٌ وَ قُرَآنٌ مُبِینٌ □

۳- □ :Surat al-Nahl (۱۶), Verse ۸۹ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَیْکَ الْکِتَابَ تِبْیٰناً لِکُلِّ شَیْءٍ □

۴- Surat al-Nisa' (۴), Verse ۱۷۴: □ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهَنٌ □

۵- Surat al-Dukhan (۴۴), Verse ۵۸: □ فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ □

۶- Surat Muhammad (۴۷), Verse ۲۴: □ أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرَآنَ أَمْ عَلـى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا □

۷- Surat al-Nur (۲۴), Verse ۳۵: □ اَللّٰهُ نُورُ السَّمٰوَاتِ وَ الأَرْضِ □

proof" because it removes all doubt and provides overwhelming proof against" .anyone who chooses to disbelieve in it

Its surface meaning is comprehensible to all as attested to by anyone who understands 'Arabic. It uses no confounding words or phrases. It does not employ any strange 'Arabic dialects. It also refrains from using the jargon specific to any .particular field that its reader would require specialized knowledge to comprehend it

The content of the Qur`an is far from the decadence of the Age of Ignorance. It does not speak of lustful desire or power mongering and pillaging. Rather the Qur`an has provided guidance to man from the time it was revealed until now, and will continue to do so until the Day of Judgment. It leads him to the epitome of humanity and everlasting felicity. It leads him to the gnosis and benefaction that lead to the perfection of the soul. It warns him of the lethal danger of saturating one's base .desires in worldly pleasures

Despite all this, much of the Qur`an's content is supernatural though it has been written using a very material vocabulary. To convey these ideas, it employs parables, stories, vernacular phrases, argumentation, words of admonishment, warnings and promises, and theological proofs. It is for this reason that the Qur`an requires an interpreter. The first exegete of the Qur`an is the Qur`an itself. According to the In the wake of .(ع) and then the Imams (ص) Qur`an the next interpreter is the Prophet the Infallibles, scholars have striven to

collect ahadith related to the exegesis of the Qur`an.

Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib (ع) says, “This is Allah’s book. Through it you gain insight. Through it you speak. And through it you hear. Some of its verses explain others. Some of its verses bear witness to others.”(1) It was the practice of the Imams (ع) to bring several disparate verses together in order to derive a law. They would explain the meaning of the verses to their disciples.

The Qur`an states:

“I swear by the places where the stars set. Indeed it is a great oath, should you know. This is indeed a noble Qur`an, in a guarded Book—no one touches it except the pure—gradually sent down from the Lord of the Worlds.”(2)

And in another place it says:

“Allah only desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and to purify you thoroughly.”(3)

According to these two verses, it is the Prophet (ص) and his household that are pure and have a comprehensive knowledge of the Qur`an. In other verses the Qur`an introduces the Prophet as its exegete and commands the believers to submit to his command.(4)

In turn, the Prophet (ص) has introduced the members of his household as the inseparable cohorts of the Qur`an. He informed us that the two can never diverge and that neither one suffices us of the other.(5) For this reason, we not only need to work to understand the Qur`an, but must also struggle to comprehend the traditions of the Infallibles.

١- Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon ١٣٣: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ تُبْصِرُونَ بِهِ، وَتَنْطِقُونَ بِهِ، وَتَسْمَعُونَ بِهِ وَيَنْطِقُ بَعْضُهُ بِبَعْضٍ، وَيَشْهَدُ بَعْضُهُ عَلى بَعْضٍ.

٢- Surat al-Waqi’ah (٥٦), Verses ٧٥-٨٠: فَلاَ أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ. وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ. إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ

كَرِی_مٌ فِی كِتَابٍ مَكْ_نُونٍ. لاَ یَمَسُّهُ إِلاَّ الْمُطَهَّرُونَ. تَنْ_زِیلٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِینَ

۳- Surat al-Ahzab (۳۳), Verse ۳۳: إِنَّمَا یُرِیدُ اللَّهُ لِیُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَیْتِ وَیُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِیرًا

۴- Surat al-Nisa' (۴), Verse ۵۹: یَا أَیُّهَا الَّذِینَ آمَنُوا أَطِیعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِیعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِی الأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ...

۵- al-Ghadir, vol. ۱, pg. ۱۷۶: أَیُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنِّی تَارِكٌ فِیكُمُ الثَّقَلَینِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَ عِتْرَتِی أَهْلَ بَیْتِی...إِنَّهُمَا لَنْ یَفْتَرِقَا حَتَى یَرِدَا عَلَیَّ الْحَوْضَ...

Accordingly, we must investigate the tools that will enable us to comprehend these two bodies of knowledge and the obstacles we must overcome to comprehend them.

The prerequisites for understanding the Qur`an and ahadith are of two kinds:

١. One must attain a purity of soul and a desire to seek the truth so that he can approach the "pure ones." As the Qur`an says, "Only the humble can be reminded."

From the other side, one must eliminate arrogance and prejudice and approach the Qur`an with fear and humility, for just as arrogance distances one from Allah's (awj) proximity, so does it blind the heart, thereby preventing it from comprehending the Qur`an.

٢. The exoteric prerequisites for understanding the Qur`an are as follows:

a. One must have a thorough knowledge of the 'Arabic language: both its vocabulary and grammar. These can be attained through the disciplines of morphology, syntax, rhetoric, style and vocabulary.

b. One must have an in-depth knowledge of Islamic history and the circumstances surrounding the revelation of the verses. He must know the Qur`anic sciences. For example, he must know the general verses and the specific ones; the unqualified verses and the qualified; the verses that abrogate and those that are abrogated.

c. He must seek protection from Allah (awj) from the cunning of Satan and from the trickery of his own lower soul.

Saying:

أَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

Audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem

I seek refuge from Satan, the cursed one

d. He should start by saying the bismillah.

e. He should know all the verses that

are in any way related to the verse in question as well as all the narrations that speak to the verse. The latter is especially important because the verses of the Qur`an have deeper, hidden meanings that no one other than the Infallibles can access.

f. One must put aside all personal bias so that he can effectively comprehend what the Qur`an has to say. If he finds that the Qur`an contradicts his previous understanding, he must accept the Qur`an's teaching and abandon his prejudice. Otherwise, he will end up imposing his own view on the Qur`an (al-tafsir bi al-ra'y).

g. One must look at the Qur`an from a metaphysical viewpoint so that he does not attribute physical traits to Allah (awj) nor liken him to his creation. To do this, he must interpret equivocal verses (al-mutashabihat) in light of unequivocal ones (al-muhkamat) and authentic traditions.

h. One must also be aware of the needs of the day. He should be aware of scientific advancements and should keep a look out for the fulfilment of certain divine promises that are found in the Qur`an. In this way he will better be able to satisfy the needs of the younger generation. As Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) says: "Allah has not sent this Qur`an for one age or another, not for one people or another. Rather, it is perpetually fresh and attractive to all people."(١)

However, one must be careful not to impose his own view on the Qur`an. The Prophet (ص) says, "Learn

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١ - Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ٨٩, pg. ١٥: عَنِ الرِّضَـا عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّ رَجُلاً سَأَلَ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع): مَا بَالُ الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَزْدَادُ عَلى النَّشْرِ وَالـدَّرْسِ إِلَّا غِضَاضَةً ؟ فَقَالَ: لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَـى لَمْ يَجْعَلْهُ لِزَمَانٍ دُونَ زَمَانٍ، وَلَا لِنَاسٍ دُونَ نَاسٍ، فَهُوَ فِى كُلِّ زَمَانٍ جَدِيدٌ، وَعِنْدَ كُلِّ قَوْمٍ غَضٌّ إِلَـى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَهِ.

the Qur`an and recite it. It is a means of remembering Allah. It is both a provision for you and a burden. Thus, follow the Qur`an, and do not make it follow you. If the Qur`an leads someone, it leads him to Paradise. But if one leads the Qur`an, it shoves ”.him into hellfire

i. One’s intention in reading and studying the Qur`an should not be limited to attaining the reward for reading it, nor to using the verses in speaking and writing. Instead of making the Qur`an an investment for this world, he should make it an investment for the afterlife. He should seek insight and understanding, and should seek to act according to its precepts. Allah (awj) forbid that his studies subject him to the .punishment of the scholar who fails to act according to his knowledge

j. When he reads verses concerning Allah’s (awj) mercy and his promises of Paradise, he should feel hopeful and should enjoin himself to obey Allah (awj) and to abandon sin. And when he reads verses containing threats of hellfire and descriptions of its punishment, he should frighten himself of sinning against Allah (awj). All this is to .purify his heart and prepare the way to eternal felicity

k. When he reads verses that describe the believers and those who fear Allah (awj) and do righteous deeds, and when he reads verses describing the disbelievers, the pagans, the beliers and the hypocrites, he should weigh himself against the scale of the Qur`an. He should take

account of himself, and purify himself of all bad attributes and adorn himself with righteousness. As Allah (awj) has said, “I have only created Mankind and the Jinn to ”.worship me

Brief Answer

point

It is a book that .(ص) The Qur`an is the eternal miracle of the Prophet Muhammad illuminates all things. Though it is composed of simple words and phrases, it is stated in a high literary style and conveys ideas that soar far beyond the comprehension of a normal human being. To perceive its essence and accurately derive laws from it, is immensely difficult. Thus, despite the fact that the Qur`an is “clear,” to properly .understand it and act upon it takes great effort

:The prerequisites to understanding the Qur`an are of two kinds

Exoteric: One must have a firm grasp on

;a. The ‘Arabic language with all its intricacies

;b. The history of Islam

;c. The circumstances that surrounded the revelation of the various verses

;d. Narrations that are directly relevant to the exegesis of the Qur`an

e. The general verses and the specific ones; the unqualified verses and the qualified; .the verses that abrogate and those that are abrogated

Esoteric

.(a. One must have the spiritual purity that comes from the fear of Allah (awj

.b. One must not be arrogant

Detailed Answer

Question ۴۳: al–Khidr’s actions in the Qur’an

point

explains his reason for (ع) Question: Regarding verse ۸۰ of Surah al-Kahf, where Khidr killing the young boy- in view of the Divine principle of not recording evil deeds or ...punishing people for them before they have taken place, some questions arise

Although Allah (awj) knew that this youth would commit evil deeds in .۱

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the future, why wasn't he granted respite (in accordance with the Divine method) until ?he could witness his own evil deeds in the future? Is this not predeterminism

٢. Was that youth favored with Divine grace because of his believing parents, and ?since he died before performing those evil deeds, will he no longer be punished

٣. Or since Allah (awj) knew that he would disobey Him in the future, will he be ?punished in the hereafter

In view of the explanations that emerge from Qur`anic commentaries, traditions, and the context of the verses, the incident of killing that teenage boy (ghulam) was not a chance event or as a result of a conflict; rather, Khidr (ع) proceeded to kill him without any preliminary exchange of words. So there is no possibility of there being any mental inclination or anger involved in this event, and the questioner's mind comes to accept the fact that though there were no provoking or inciting factors involved, without doubt the killing had wisdom and special reason behind it. It did not follow from base desires. The action was undertaken by someone about whom the Qur`an ,says

"One of Our servants whom We granted mercy from Ourselves and whom we (granted knowledge from Ourselves"(١)

one of Our servants whose hearts' vessel We filled with Our exclusive mercy and .whom We taught from Our select knowledge

So we can be certain that personal desire was not involved. But in terms of its emotional wisdom and how it can be believed that

١- Surat al-Kahf (١٨), Verse ۶۵: فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا

such a person would undertake to kill a young man, an answer is required, which is .presented as follows

saw this scene, he (ع) It is understood from some traditions that when Prophet Musa was profoundly shocked, and because he saw the killing as unjustified based on its and said, “Did you kill an innocent person (ع) outward appearance, he turned to Khidr ”.who wasn’t worthy of death? What you have done is unacceptable and abhorrent

briefly explains his reason for what he did “The Divine will and (ع) At this point, Khidr wisdom are superior to all things, and the unsophisticated intellect of human beings cannot comprehend the finer points of Allah’s (awj) affairs and His will. Thus, human intellects have no authority over His will; rather, His will holds sway over human intellects. So don’t just rely on your reasoning and its superficial understanding, and (for now patiently bear whatever I do…”(١)

:Looking carefully into this tradition, we conclude that

١. Every thing has an outer aspect and an inner reality. If something has a good and innocent-looking outer form but underneath is evil and sinful, it is not possible to .simply rely on laws pertaining to the outer aspect

٢. Sometimes Allah (awj) decides, on the basis of some overriding good, to act beyond the limits of apparent recompense and desires to apply the [laws of the] inner .dimension, along with its reward or punishment

٣. The killing of the young man was entirely dependent on Allah’s (awj) command; did (ع) Khidr

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١- ʻIlal al-Sharayiʻ, vol. ١, pg. ٦٠-٦١: فَانْطَلَقَا حَتَّى إِذَا لَقِيَا غُلَامًا فَقَتَلَهُ الْخِضْرُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَغَضِبَ مُوْسى وَأَخَذَ بِتَلَابِيْبِهِ وَقَالَ لَهُ : أَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةً بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْئًا نُكْرًا ، قَالَ لَهُ الْخِضْرُ إِنَّ الْعُقُوْلَ لَا تَحْكُمُ على أَمْرِ اللهِ تَعَالى ذِكْرُهُ بَلْ أَمْرُ اللهِ يَحْكُمُ عَلَيْهَا ، فَسَلِّمْ لِمَا ترى مِنِّيْ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَيْهِ

(not perform this deed without a Divine command, but was merely executing His will.(۱)

Here the question presents itself as to whether by killing that youth, Allah (awj) has punished him before any crime has been committed on his part. The points below can help us answer this question.

۱. If a person is born to Muslim parents and then denies his or her faith after attaining maturity, the rules of an "apostate from nature" (murtadd fitri) will apply to him or her. If that person is a man, he will be worthy of death. It has come in several traditions: "[Though the Qur`an clearly states that] the parents of that young man were believers, their son was an disbeliever, to the extent that there was no hope of his heart opening up to the truth, and the seal of obstinacy and rejection of faith had been placed on it."(۲)

So while it is true that his apparent conduct in playing with his friends did not reveal his disbelief (just as Musa (ع), relying on this outward state, thought him innocent), the reality of his heart and beliefs proved his disbelief (as demonstrated in the Divine knowledge and its revelation to Khidr (ع)). As a result, his being killed was merely a result of his choosing to be an apostate, which carries the consequence in this world of termination of physical life.

۲. Allah (awj) knew that the continuation of the young man's life would lead to nothing but more spiritual and

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۱- Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. ۳, pg. ۲۸۳-۲۸۴

۲- 'Ilal al-Sharayi', vol. ۱, pg. ۶۱: ...وَ أَمَّا الْغُلَامُ، فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ وَ طُبِعَ كَافِراً...

material loss for him because he would mislead his believing parents, break apart family ties, and deprive them of the worldly and otherworldly blessings of faith for the family and for society. Thus, since the good in his life up until that point had come to an end, Allah (awj) determined to terminate his life and put in place the means of taking his life—just as a person takes care of things as long as their good outweighs their harm, but then no longer takes an interest in them when that is not the case.

In this instance, though the soul was seized by the angel Jibra`il and his servants, Allah (awj) wished for the apparent executor of His will (ending the life of that young man) to be one of His chosen and merciful servants who had knowledge of His special sciences, namely Khidr (ع).

In other words, his action was based on Allah's (awj) creational and legislative will with respect to the death of that young man, and in this respect his death was like all other deaths that are caused by accidents or other causes (with the difference that an accidental killing is not in accordance with Allah's (awj) legislative will and He has not commanded it to take place; but the killing under discussion and all natural deaths take place in accordance with Allah's (awj) permission and indication both legislatively and creationally [i.e. natural causality].

Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq (ع) solving this problem, says, "...Khidr's concern

was for events not to take such a turn that he would be prevented from carrying out what he was commanded, such that he would remain deprived of the reward of carrying out Allah's will, that is, ending the life of that young man (the beginning and end of which are both in accordance with Divine grace and the greater good, not in accordance with what the human being deserves)—especially since carrying out this command was a source of mercy for the parents of that youth (since as the Qur`an knew that in place of that son Allah would give them a child who (ع) clearly says, Khidr would be pure and a source of unity for the family. In addition, the coming to pass of to be able to reveal Divine secrets and explain hidden (ع) this Divine will allowed Khidr ".(ع) truths to Musa

began explaining his reasons, he said, 'In any (ع) It is worthy of note that "When Khidr case, we feared that the young man would later become rebellious and lead his parents towards disbelief.'" That is, in explaining the process of performing this action, he doesn't make mention of his own will at all and instead uses the plural verb "we feared" to show that as executor of Divine will he did not act alone, but Divine assistance and the intermediaries of His court were with him—with the difference and others are subject (ع) that fear cannot be attributed to Allah (awj), but Khidr

to fear.(۱) (The issuance and execution of the command is shared, while the fear of failure in fully executing the Divine command is exclusive to Khidr (ع)).

Why is it that though Allah (awj) knew that the young man would fall into disobedience in the future, He gave him no respite (in accordance with the Divine Way) and did not allow him to witness his own evil deeds in the future? Isn't this predeterminism?

It is clear from the preceding explanation that:

۱. Life itself is a Divine blessing; no one has an entitlement to it. From this perspective the issue of demanding a continuation of life doesn't arise, let alone for one to ask for a reason for its non-continuation.

۲. Allah (awj) had willed for that young man's life to be ended in accordance with His wisdom and the greater good.

But in answer to this question it is possible to bring up other aspects of this issue as well:

۱. The youth was culpable in two respects: he was an "apostate from nature"; and he had the ability to destroy the foundation of his parents' faith. Allah (awj) observed that he didn't use the respite He had given to reform himself and make amends or abandon unbelief and apostasy. Therefore, He carried out the command of killing him.(۲)

۲. If the young man were to remain alive, he would put into practice his intention (of leading others to disbelief), and in this case greater harm and damage would result. Thus, to prevent those

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۱- Ilal al-Sharayi', vol. ۱, pg. ۶۱': فَاشْتَرَكَ بِالْأَنَانِيَّهِ بِقَوْلِهِ : ﴿ فَخَشِينَا أَنْ يَرْهَقَهُمَا طُغْيَاناً وَكُفْراً فَأَرَدْنَا أَنْ يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْراً مِنْهُ زَكَاهً وَأَقْرَبُ رُحْماً ﴾ وَإِنَّمَا اشْتَرَكَ فِى الْأَنَانِيَّهِ لِأَنَّهُ خَشِيَ وَاللهُ لَا يَخْشى لِأَنَّهُ لَا يَفُوتُهُ شَيْءٌ وَلَا يَمْتَنِعُ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ أَرَادَهُ ، وَإِنَّمَا خَشِيَ الْخِضْرُ ، مِنْ أَنْ يُحَالَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ مَا أُمِرَ فِيْهِ فَلَا يَدْرِكُ ثَوَابَ الْإِمْضَاءَ فِيْهِ ، وَوَقَعَ فِى نَفْسِهِ أَنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى ذِكْرُهُ جَعَلَهُ سَبَبًا لَرَحْمَهِ أَبَوَىِ الْغُلَامِ فَعَمِلَ فِيْهِ وَسَطَ الْأَمْرِ مِنَ الْبَشَرِيَّه.

٢ – This has only been put forth as a possibility by some analysts and it is not necessarily the correct.

future consequences, the command to end the life of such a being was issued. In addition, it can be gleaned from the apparent sense of the verse that this son was not as obedient and beneficial as he ought to be and in that short time after attaining maturity had already committed sins and misdeeds. In this way, he worked to lead his .parents astray

As verse ٨١ of Surah al-Kahf indicates, Allah (awj) had decreed to reward the .٣ parents of that young man for their faith by granting them a model child. From this it can be understood that not only would his remaining alive result in his parents' going astray and him not receiving the punishment of his apostasy, it would also prevent another good from reaching them. This point is clearly explained in the traditions: "Allah had willed to give them in place of that son a daughter who would bear a son in whose line would be numerous prophets, one after the other, such that seventy (prophets would descend from that one daughter."(١

Thus, another result of not granting respite to that young man was for that line of .prophets to come into being

It goes without saying that it is the Divine Way (sunnah) for the parents of prophets to be believers. So if the son remained alive and pulled his parents towards unbelief, it would contradict this Divine principle. This is why the question doesn't arise as to why it wasn't possible for both the son

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١ - Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. ٣, pg. ٢٨۶, no. ١٧٠-١٧٣: أَبْدَلَهُمَا اللّٰهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مَكَانَ الإِبْنِ إِبْنَةً، فَوُلِدَ مِنْهَا سَبْعُونَ نَبِيًا.

.to live and the line of prophets to come into being

Was the young man availed of Divine grace on account of his parents and, since he died before committing those evil deeds, was he no longer subject to punishment? Or, ?since Allah (awj) knew that he would disobey Him in the future, will he be punished

In view of the preceding explanation and following points, it can be deduced that this putting to death was a source of mercy for all involved: the young man who was killed, .who killed him, and the parents of the young man (ع) Khidr

:a. The good that came to young man as a result of being put to death

He received punishment in this world for his apostasy, which may lessen his .١ .punishment in the hereafter

If he remained alive, he would make his parents unbelievers and would be .٢ .responsible for the sin of their apostasy and unbelief

Creedal disbelief leads to decadence and sinful behavior. Thus, his death in youth .٣ forever sealed his scroll of evil deeds, and on the Day of Judgment he will not be .punished for all the sins he would have committed had he lived longer

He wasn't capable of fulfilling his duties towards his parents, and the pain he would .۴ thus cause his parents itself would increase his burden of sins and his parents' .aversion to him

:b. The good that came to his parents

.Their faith remained unharmed .١

To resist such a son wouldn't lead anywhere, and their parental .٢

love and emotions would soften their hearts towards him and weaken their faith. Thus, they were also saved from the tension and unease that would result from his .remaining alive

Their patience and contentment with Allah's (awj) will were tested, and they were .۳ .able to be successful in this test

In place of an immoral and rebellious son, they were granted a pure, devoted, and .۴ .blessed daughter

They were blessed with becoming the progenitors of seventy prophets, whose .۵ .reward and forgiveness they benefited from

Their memory was eternally recorded in the everlasting revelation of the Qur`an, .۶ .and they became an example for others

:c. The benefit that came to his killer

.(He was granted the ability to carry out a Divine decree (Divine will .۱

.He was the cause of blessings for a Muslim family .۲

He was able to teach some of the secrets of revelation and unseen realities to Musa .۳ .(ع)

describes these blessings in these words: (ع) Imam Ja'far b. Muhammad as-Sadiq "Allah knew that if he stayed alive, the young man would lead his parents to disbelief and he would become a source of corruption and hardship for all. Thus Khidr (ع) was commanded to finish his life so that as a result all of them (the killer, the killed, and his (parents) would attain honor and Divine grace."(۱)

Answer

Question ۴۴: Existence of spirits within animals and its differnce from that of the Human Being

point

Question: Do animals possess souls and if so how does the animal soul differ from the ?human soul

,.This question will be considered in the light of Sadrian philosophy, i.e

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١ - Tafsir Safi, vol. ٣, pg. ٢٥٦: فِی الْعِلَلِ عَنِ الصَّادِقِ (ع): عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ إِنْ بَقی کَفَرَ أَبَوَاهُ وَافْتُتِنَا بِهِ وَضَلَّا بِإِضْلَالِهِ فَأَمَرَنِیَ اللهُ بِقَتْلِهِ وَأَرَادَ بِذَلِکَ نَقْلَهُمْ إِلَی مَحَلِّ کَرَامَتِهِ فِی الْعَاقِبَهِ.

Transcendent Theosophy. In the numerous works by Mulla Sadra and the subsequent philosophers who espoused his philosophy, there are numerous allusions and in some cases detailed expositions of the question in hand in the chapters dealing with the topics of soul, Resurrection, knowledge, and comprehension. The material prepared for this question will be presented under two main headings and five shorter sections. The essay will then end with the topic of the difference between the human soul and .the animal soul

Brief Answer

Before embarking on the answer to this question, it must be noted that the answer provided below is based on the school of Transcendent Theosophy, i.e., Sadrian philosophy. In this light, the answer will be expounded under two main headings and .several subtopics

Under the first heading, "The Existence of Spirit in Animals", the following topics will be :examined

In all philosophical discussions pertaining to the question of the spirit, animal spirit is .١ always enumerated as an indubitable instance of spirit. However, obviously the various forms of spirit possess their own peculiarities which distinguish them from .one another

What comprises the essence of an animal is its animal spirit, and to imagine the .٢ animal without an animal spirit would be to downgrade it to the lower degree of .existence—i.e., vegetable existence

In several animals, such as the honey bee, the spider, etc., the signs of an indwelling .٣ .spirit are clearly noticeable

Scholars provide various sorts of evidence for the existence of animal spirit— .۴ among them: the presential knowledge of animals

of their own essences, the role that will plays in animal behaviour, the resurrection of animal spirits in the Hereafter.

۵. The fact that animals can comprehend imaginal and immaterial forms and the performance by them of varying dissimilar actions.

The topics covered in the second heading, “The Difference between the Animal and the Human Spirit”, are as follows:

۱. Human nature is different from animal nature. The material components of the human body are relatively finer and more perfect.

۲. Human spirit also differs from animal spirit in many respects; including the human capacity to communicate by employing letters, words, thoughts, etc., and the human psychological variations—such as laughter, weeping, etc.—in response to different external phenomena.

۳. The existence of art, industry, and human innovation display clearly the superiority of the human soul as they have no place in the realm of animals.

۴. The essential difference of the human soul from the animal soul is that the former is intellectual while the latter is imaginal.

۵. In addition, the sole pursuit of the animal soul is the gratification of the corporeal needs while the scope of human soul, in terms of its conceptual and practical aspects, stretches to the farthest reaches of existence.

Detailed Answer

The Existence of Spirit in Animals

The Animal Soul as One of the Instances of Spirit in Existence

In philosophical inquiries into the topic of the soul, where the soul is defined, it is commonly divided into three classes: vegetable soul, animal soul, and human soul. Despite the fact that each one of these classes possesses its own peculiarities which

distinguish it from its

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counterparts, they all share a common reality and essence. The soul is a spiritual and immaterial existent which incorporates spiritual faculties, whether it be the intellectual soul, the imaginal soul(1), or the vegetable soul.

The Creation of the Animal Spirit as One of the Phases of the Origination of the Realm of Materiality

Mulla Sadra is among those thinkers who hold that the origination of material existents was carried out in stages, starting from the simplest and advancing to the stage of the most perfect elements. In some of these stages, the mere combination of material ingredients was not enough and thus the addition of an immaterial element to the composition was called for, so as to satisfy the requirements of that particular order of creation. One such stage was the creation of the animal. The spirit that was infused in the composition to bring about the animal existence is termed the "animal spirit."

Hence, not only does the animal possess a soul, furthermore it owes its essence to that soul. The addition of the soul to the material ingredients is a requirement of the order of the realm of materiality. And the same case applies to the realms of the human being and the vegetable. The immaterial spirit or soul is what distinguishes some material entities from others. In the inanimate, the lack of such a spirit is what makes their nature, while in others the possession thereof makes them what they are. And among the animate, it is the variation in the degrees of the spirit that sets them apart in differing levels of existence. The vegetable soul

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١- This term will be explained further in the text.

lies at the bottom while the human spirit enjoys the apex and the animal spirit the .median seat

The Outward Manifestations of the Soul in the Animal

point

The appearance of certain traits in various animals—such as the building of the hexagonal hive by the honeybee, the weaving of the delicate web by the spider, the monkey's and the parrot's mimicking the human being, the cleverness of the horse, the authority of the lion, the faithfulness of the dog, the deceptiveness of the crow, etc.—are, in the view of Mulla Sadra, evidence of the existence of a limited intelligence which indicates the presence of a soul in the animal. The character traits of some of these animals are so complex as to render them very close to the level of the human .being

Scientific Indications Corroborating the Existence of an Animal Spirit

All animals possess an imaginal soul that is similar to the human imaginal soul. The animal spirit is at the level of imaginal immateriality, which is the intermediate level between the realm of the sensible and the realm of Intellection. The zenith of animal existence is the imaginal existence, hence accommodating the imaginal soul. It is due to this degree of immateriality and spiritual potency that it possesses presential self-.knowledge, for no inanimate object can ever have self-knowledge

According to Mulla Sadra, all actions in the cosmos derive from will. This is so even in the case of the vegetable and the inanimate, with the difference that in their case the will in question is that of the higher intellects and spirits. That is, the inanimate and the vegetable

.are involuntarily the means of the realization of the higher wills

But in the case of the animal and the human being, the prerequisites for the actualization of an action that falls in the scope of their volition must be realized by themselves, and it is for this reason that the actions of animals and human beings are unpredictable while those attributed to the inanimate and the vegetable are monotonous. The source where animal action originates is the imaginal and the conjectural faculty while in the human being it is the practical intellect. Imagination, speculation, intellection, will, etc., are all manifestations of a soul and as such are the .traits that distinguish the creature possessed of a spirit from that which lacks it

In addition to the worldly effects of the soul, one can also point to the issues of eschatology and the Resurrection of the body and soul of all animate creatures possessed of a soul. For this reason, all the philosophers who have dealt with the question of eschatology have designated a part to the subject of the resurrection of .animal souls, its conditions, and other relevant details

Proofs for the Existence of Spirit in the Animal

The animal is undoubtedly endowed with a spirit, i.e., an immaterial aspect, for it possesses the imaginal faculty which is capable of comprehending ghosts and imaginal forms. These things are not sensorially tangible and hence are not .inhabitants of the material world

Therefore, the imaginal faculty, which is the receptacle for the comprehension of ,these immaterial existents

is also not sensorially tangible and as such is not corporeal. For, every material existent occupies a certain material location. This also holds true of the dependents of .that material existent

This is while the imaginal forms and ghosts comprehended by the imaginal faculty do not occupy a certain material location, and so it follows that the imaginal faculty, which is the receptacle for their impressions, also lacks material location and hence is .not corporeal

Moreover, the variety of the actions performed by the animals does not only corroborate the existence of a soul in them but can also stand as a cogent argument for substantiating this claim. For the effects derived from material existents and inanimate objects are immutably monotonous and repetitious. Thus, when the state of an existent is so unpredictable as to make it difficult to even catch two identical actions from the same agent due to it altering its reactions based on varying external and internal circumstances—in such a case, reason rules that there must be some .other immaterial factor involved

The Difference between the Animal Soul and the Human Soul

It was pointed out that from the perspective of philosophy, the existentiation of the material realm was a progressive process carried out in various stages, each more complex than the preceding stage. In this light, although the material constitution of the animal was a finer composition in comparison to that of the vegetable, which qualified it for receiving the animal soul, yet it still needed to be perfected further in order to accommodate the human spirit

so as to bring about the human being, the being which had been selected as the dominant creature capable of utilizing all other creatures in his service, as he was the goal and end of creation.

Although the human being in a strictly logical categorization is from the same material as that which constitutes the animal, the thing that makes it unique is so profound that if, by way of analogy, all the rest of the animals were set on one side of a scale and the human being on the opposite, he would definitely weigh heavier.

The human being is capable of speech and as such is able to communicate his thoughts and intentions with fellow human beings in the form of letters and words, which can be formed into innumerable permutations and combinations. But the capacity of animals like the parrot in manipulating words is limited and confined to mimicking and is devoid of any thought.

Also the communication of certain animals in the form of sounds and signals—like the honey bee, the ant, etc.—which has been scientifically observed, is a fixed method not capable of change during the course of their lives. But in the case of the human being, although initially learning many of his language skills by way of imitation, eventually every individual comes to possess a distinct method of communication.

The psychological impressions that the human being receives from the environment and the physiological and psychological states that result thereof—such as amazement and laughter in

response to rare but pleasing events, grief and weeping in response to adverse circumstances, shamefulness following unbecoming conduct, and anxiety and hope vis-à-vis the past, the present, and the future—and the planning and decisions that .the human being makes based on these states are unique qualities

And although the ant's performance in storing food can be considered as a sort of forethought, it is nevertheless an instinctual and involuntary behaviour, for it is always done in the same manner and in the same timeframe. This is in contrast to the human being whose seemingly passive psychological states—such as laughter, weeping, etc. —are absolutely voluntary and thus are manageable in special circumstances and .through prudence

Craftsmanship, art, industry, innovation, and, in the words of Mulla Sadra, "the amazing practical innovations" that have flourished in the course of human history, and the fact that man has single-handedly changed the face of the world and has either manipulated all the elements of this world or is on the verge thereof is proof of the inimitable spiritual superiority of the human being, for not even a slight fraction of this sort of activity has appeared in the animal realm. The entire lifespan of an animal is occupied merely by roaming about in pursuit of the dictates of its imaginal and .conjectural faculties

The animal's imaginal and conjectural planning revolve around its personal or specific benefit. In keeping itself safe from various dangers and securing water and food and satisfying its sexual appetite, it is, on the

one hand, safeguarding its individual interests and, on the other hand, contributing to the survival of its species. It is for this reason that the animal soul is referred to as "the imaginal soul."

The summit of the imaginal soul is the beginning point for the human soul. The animal can advance only up to the point where the human domain begins. In other words the final reaches of the realm of the imaginal soul is just the beginning of the domain of the intellect; it is the threshold through which one enters into the human realm, to which there is no conceivable end. It is the intellect that defines the human being. Hence, those who do not take advantage of their intellects remain at the level of the beast.

Through the theoretical intellect, the human being is able to comprehend immaterial concepts and thereby to transform his ignorance to knowledge. The human being draws a mental image of all that he encounters by the senses. It then uses these concepts to form another set of concepts which are more universal and abstract.

The latter concepts enhance the mind's innovative capabilities. The human mind uses the latter concepts to arrive at various sorts of rules, judgments, and arguments and by juxtaposing them in a systematized fashion produces systematic thought, philosophy, and the sciences. If the human being persists in this endeavour, every new day will expand the horizon of his cognition until he passes from the human domain—which is the

admixture of body and soul, of corporeal needs and intellectual faculties—to the domain of pure intellection, where he is united with the Madonna Intelligenza at which .stage he finds the whole world realized within the scope of his knowledge

The genuine human being makes his practical intellect—which derives its directives from the knowledge acquired by the theoretical intellect—the guide of his conduct. The theoretical and practical intellects have limitless power in both the material and the spiritual directions. The human being has succeeded in obtaining knowledge .previously not even imaginable, thereby reshaping his surrounding world

The innermost reality of the world is just as much accessible to him, this being demonstrated by those who have attained to human perfection. By the light of their esoteric knowledge—which can best be referred to as 'irfan—they have traversed the path to Divine proximity. That is, they have conquered the visible realm, the Realm of Intellection, the Supreme Dominion, and the Domain of Invincibility, thereby .ascending to the zenith of human perfection

The interesting point is that these two paths of infinite possibilities, i.e., the paths of exoteric and esoteric knowledge, are in no way at odds. To the contrary, the more one studies the worldly phenomena, given that he be fair and unbiased, the better he acknowledges the profundity of this world and the greatness of its creator. Likewise, he who has traversed the path of 'Irfan understands all the more acutely the necessity of studying the worldly phenomena so as to better admire

.the majesty of the Creator

Question ۴۵: Limiting the Ahlul Bayt to a few individuals

point

?to a few people (ع) Question: Why do you limit the Ahlul Bayt

in the Verse of Purification are limited to the five (ع) To prove that the Ahlul Bayt "people of the cloak" (ahl al-kisa': the Prophet, 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn, upon whom be peace), various textual and traditional proofs that are accepted by Sunnis .and Shi'as can be forwarded. We will look at each of these proofs separately

Brief Answer

point

to the fourteen infallibles is not a human decision; it is (ع) The limiting of the Ahlul Bayt an exclusivity understood from the Divine words in the Verse of Purification and the .(ص) traditions of the noble Prophet

There are numerous discursive and traditional proofs than can be relied on to prove .this claim

Discursive and textual proofs

a. The Qur`an consists of the words of Allah (awj) that He revealed to His Prophet in the Arabic language. And Allah's (awj) words, like His actions, are free of any sort of .defect; it is not possible for them to contain any type of grammatical mistake

Now, if the term Ahlul Bayt in the Verse of Purification were to refer to all relatives of it would be in violation of the rules of Arabic grammar and ,(ص) the Prophet detrimental to the eloquence and perfection of the Divine word. This is because the had more than fifteen wives and for a masculine pronoun to be used in (ص) Prophet the Verse of Purification to refer to a group, the majority of which were

women, would be contrary to proper ‘Arabic speech. Thus, the pronouns in the verse .(ع) in the house of Fatima (ص) refer to the descendents and trustees of the Prophet

b. To determine the meaning of a word, it is necessary to look at the context in which it originated in order to understand its true exact sense. In the Verse of Purification, the word ahl (family or people) is under discussion. This word must always be in a possessive phrase, at least in meaning if not in words. That is, its meaning is .incomplete unless it is attributed or related to something else

In this verse as well it has been attributed to al-bayt, or the house of prophecy; and If al-bayt .(ع) we know that this can apply to no house aside from that of Fatima to be included (ص) referred to an inhabited house, for the other wives of the Prophet in this phrase, Umm Salamah—in whose house the verse was revealed—should be the first person to be included in the phrase. But the opposite is true, since the with Umm Salamah’s agreement—did not consider her to be among—(ص) Prophet .the Ahlul Bayt

Traditional proofs

aimed to clarify and delimit (ص) a. There are a group of traditions in which the Prophet said that this verse (ص) in the Verse of Purification. Thus, the Prophet (ع) the Ahlul Bayt .(ع) was revealed about five people: himself, ‘Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn

b. Another group of traditions that mention the Prophet’s actions in

this regard, since practical teachings are more lasting than oral teachings. Thus, it has would come to the door of (ص) been narrated that for six months the Prophet house at prayer times and say, "Prayers, O People of the House!" and he (ع) Fatima's .would recite the Verse of Purification

c. A third group are the accounts that indicate that it was well-known to the people that the Ahlul Bayt are limited to these people, the details of which have been .mentioned in books of Qur`anic exegesis

Detailed Answer

Discursive or Textual Proofs

a. The Qur`an is the word of Allah (awj) and is a miracle from more than just a single aspect. The most accessible and easily grasped of those aspects is the Qur`an's .eloquence

That is, there exists no literary mistake in the matter, style, or choice of wording of the Noble Book. We know that in 'Arabic there are separate feminine pronouns used in the second and third persons. In using a pronoun, numerous aspects are taken into account. For example, when there are significantly more women in a group than men, .a feminine pronoun is used

Now, if a masculine pronoun were to be used in addressing a group consisting primarily of women, it would be considered a grammatical mistake. If a person uses masculine pronouns in place of feminine ones or vice versa, it would be an amusing eternal (ص) mistake. Far be it from the Qur`an, the Word of Allah and the Prophet's .miracle, to make such a mistake

The Verse of Purification

has the words ‘ankum and yutahhirakum, in which the pronouns are masculine, though Allah (awj) is well aware that there were more women in the Prophet’s household than men. So if we were to hold that this verse refers to all of his household and family, we would have to say that we have found a grammatical mistake in the Qur`an, that is, the use of two masculine pronouns in place of feminine ones—a mistake that is clear and undeniable.

It is obvious that this is inconsistent with the Muslim belief in the Qur`an’s miraculousness and Allah’s (awj) Knowledge and Wisdom, and is thus unacceptable. Thus, the two pronouns must refer to a group that would permit masculine pronouns to be used. And this is only the case if we take the pronouns in the verse to refer to the Prophet’s household in the house of Fatimah, that is, the Prophet, Fatimah, ‘Ali, Hasan, and Husayn (ع).

b. The word ahl (family) in Arabic must always be part of a possessive phrase in meaning. That is, it must be related or attributed to something else for its own meaning to become clear, as in ahl al-kitab (people of the book), ahl al-iman (people of faith, or believers), and ahl al-nifaq (people of hypocrisy, or hypocrites).

Thus part of the meaning of the word ahl is denoted by the word to which it is attributed. So, if we wish to know what ahl means in the Verse of Purification we must first determine the

.(meaning of the word bayt (house

The word bayt means “house” or “abode” and denotes a place. Now what is meant by this word in different usages is something that is explained by contextual clues, both .(internal (verbal) and external (nonverbal

The same holds true for the topic under discussion, that is, the expression “Ahlul Bayt.” So if there are no contextual clues to limit, expand, or clarify what Allah intended with this expression, if we were to ignore the literary objection that would result, it would be possible to take “Ahlul Bayt” to refer to everyone related to the in his houses. In this case, the word bayt would mean “home” or (ص) Prophet .”“residence

But with a little attention to some external contextual clues, such as the situation in which the verse was revealed, we will realize that such a meaning is untrue, because (ص) although the verse was revealed in the very house of Umm Salamah, the Prophet If bayt were to refer to a residence, .(ع) clearly said she was not one of the Ahlul Bayt Umm Salamah—in whose home the verse was revealed—should be its first .addressee and more worthy of this title than anyone else

But it has already been shown that this is contrary to reality. In this regard, it would be :good to refer to a tradition that Wahidi Nishapuri has narrated

was in [my] house and food was before (ص) Umm Salamah relates that the Prophet“ [,said, ‘[Fatimah (ص) entered. The Prophet (ع) him when Fatimah

came and sat (ع) call your husband and sons to come to me.' 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn .fell asleep (ص) down. While they were eating, the Prophet

during this time, and I was in the (ص) There was a Khaybari cloak under the Prophet" .[adjoining] room praying. Then Allah revealed the Verse of Purification

covered them ['Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn] with his (ص) After this, the Prophet" cloak as well. Then he took out his hands and, facing the sky, said: 'O Allah! These are my Ahlul Bayt and the closest ones to me. Remove from them all uncleanliness and '.purify them

At that time I came to their room and asked, 'Am I too with you O Messenger of" (Allah?' He replied, 'You are on the right [path]. You are on the right [path].'"(١

praised Umm Salamah without considering her to be one (ص) In this way, the Prophet .of the Ahlul Bayt

There are numerous traditions with the above purport in Sunni hadith collections(٢). This is the same tradition that is well-known among Shi'as as the tradition of the cloak .(hadith al-Kisa) and which is found in most books of hadith and supplications

Traditional Proofs

There are numerous traditions that clarify what Allah (awj) meant by Ahlul Bayt in the verse of Purification. In view of the various details and aspects explained in these traditions, we have divided them into three groups and will mention one example from each group. It is worthy of mentioning that only Sunni sources have been used for

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Al-Kafi, vol. ١, pg. ٢٨٧ -١

Sunan Tirmizhi, vol.٥, pg. ٣٠ is only one example -٢

the following traditions, though comparable traditions are abundant in Shi'a sources .as well

words regarding (ص) a. The first group consists of traditions that explain the Prophet's .the purport of the expression Ahlul Bayt in the verse of Purification

Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, with a chain reaching Abu Sa'id al-Khidri, narrates that said, "This verse was revealed regarding five people—me, 'Ali, (ص) the Prophet :Fatimah, Hasan, and Husayn

Verily, Allah only wishes to remove all uncleanliness from you, O people of the house,' (and purify you thoroughly.'"(١

b. The second group consists of traditions that came after the meaning of Ahlul Bayt had been explained verbally and that clarify its meaning in actions through the .(ص) conduct of the Prophet

Ibn Waki` , in a chain leading to Anas, relates that he would say, "For six months after would go for (ص) the Verse of Purification was revealed, whenever the Prophet prayers, he would stand outside the door of Fatimah's house and say, '[It is time for] (the prayers, O people of the house!' and then he would recite this verse."(٢

Does this prophetic action, which continued for ١٨٠ days, five times a day, in explaining ?the meaning of Ahlul Bayt leave any room for doubt

c. The third group consists of traditions that are historical in nature and explain the thoughts and actions of the people of that era with respect to the Verse of Purification and who it addresses. In view of these traditions, it can be said that this issue—the limitation of the Verse of

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Jami' al-Bayan, vol. ٢٢, pg. ٩ -١
Jami' al-Bayan, vol. ٢٢, pg. ٩ -٢

was so well-known among the Muslims—(ع) Purification to the five people of the cloak that whenever they would see one of them, they would say, “I saw so-and-so, who is of the Ahlul Bayt.” Or they would indicate them and say, “So-and-so is of the ahl al-bayt.” As an example, one can refer to the story of Abu Mijlaz, the details of which .(have been mentioned in Sunni books of tafsir(۱) (Qur`anic commentary

Question ۴۶: Compatibility of Religion and Politics

point

?Question: Is religion compatible with politics

Brief Answer

A religion that has come in order to explain the path to felicity from now until the end of time cannot remain indifferent to a matter that all societies need, that is, government. In other words, the rules and regulations of Islam are such that they .depend on a government and without which Islam cannot remain alive

Detailed Answer

has said the following in one of his statements regarding (ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Musa al-Rida the necessity of an Islamic government: “We have not found any nation that has survived without a leader. This is because the regulation and management of their religious and worldly needs depends upon a responsible leader. It is far from the wisdom of Allah to leave His servants without a leader while He well knows that they need a ruler who would give the society structure and stability. A leader that would lead the people in war against the enemies, distribute the wealth amongst them, lead (the Friday prayers, and protect the oppressed against the tyrants.” (۲

From another

Jami’ al-Bayan, vol. ۲۵, pg. ۷۰ -۱

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. ۶, pp. ۶۰-۶۱ -۲ فَإِنْ قَالَ فَلِمَ جَعَلَ أُولِی الْأَمْرِ وَ أَمَرَ بِطَاعَتِهِمْ قِیلَ لِعِلَلٍ کَثِیرَهٍ مِنْهَا أَنَّ الْخَلْقَ لَمَّا

وَقَعُوا عَلَى حَدٍّ مَحْدُودٍ وَ أُمِرُوا أَنْ لَا يَتَعَدَّوْا ذَلِکَ الْحَدَّ (تِلْکَ الْحُدُودَ) لِمَا فِيهِ مِنْ فَسَادِهِمْ لَمْ يَکُنْ يَثْبُتُ ذَلِکَ وَ لَا يَقُومُ إِلَّا بِأَنْ يَجْعَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهِ أَمِيناً يَمْنَعُهُمْ مِنَ التَّعَدِّي وَ الدُّخُولِ فِيمَا حُظِرَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِأَنَّهُ لَوْ لَمْ يَکُنْ ذَلِکَ کَذَلِکَ لَکَانَ أَحَدٌ لَا يَتْرُکُ لَذَّتَهُ وَ مَنْفَعَتَهُ لِفَسَادِ غَيْرِهِ فَجَعَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَيِّماً يَمْنَعُهُمْ مِنَ الْفَسَادِ وَ يُقِيمُ فِيهِمُ الْحُدُودَ وَ الْأَحْکَامَ وَ مِنْهَا أَنَّا لَا نَجِدُ فِرْقَةً مِنَ الْفِرَقِ وَ لَا مِلَّةً مِنَ الْمِلَلِ بَقُوا وَ عَاشُوا إِلَّا بِقَيِّمٍ وَ رَئِيسٍ لِمَا لَا بُدَّ لَهُمْ مِنْهُ فِي أَمْرِ الدِّينِ وَ الدُّنْيَا فَلَمْ يَجُزْ فِي حِکْمَةِ الْحَکِيمِ أَنْ يَتْرُکَ الْخَلْقَ مِمَّا يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لَهُمْ مِنْهُ وَ لَا قِوَامَ لَهُمْ إِلَّا بِهِ فَيُقَاتِلُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّهُمْ وَ يَقْسِمُونَ بِهِ فَيْئَهُمْ وَ يُقِيمُ لَهُمْ جُمُعَتَهُمْ وَ جَمَاعَتَهُمْ وَ يَمْنَعُ ظَالِمَهُمْ مِنْ مَظْلُومِهِمْ وَ مِنْهَا أَنَّهُ لَوْ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ إِمَاماً قَيِّماً أَمِيناً حَافِظاً مُسْتَوْدَعاً لَدَرَسَتِ الْمِلَّةُ وَ ذَهَبَ الدِّينُ وَ غُيِّرَتِ السُّنَّةُ وَ الْأَحْکَامُ وَ لَزَادَ فِيهِ الْمُبْتَدِعُونَ وَ نَقَصَ مِنْهُ الْمُلْحِدُونَ وَ شَبَّهُوا ذَلِکَ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ لِأَنَّا قَدْ وَجَدْنَا الْخَلْقَ مَنْقُوصِينَ مُحْتَاجِينَ غَيْرَ کَامِلِينَ مَعَ اخْتِلَافِهِمْ وَ اخْتِلَافِ أَهْوَائِهِمْ وَ تَشَتُّتِ أَنْحَائِهِمْ فَلَوْ لَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُمْ قَيِّماً حَافِظاً لِمَا جَاءَ بِهِ الرَّسُولُ ص لَفَسَدُوا عَلَى نَحْوِ مَا بَيَّنَّا وَ غُيِّرَتِ الشَّرَائِعُ وَ السُّنَنُ وَ الْأَحْکَامُ وَ الْإِيمَانُ وَ کَانَ فِي ذَلِکَ فَسَادُ الْخَلْقِ أَجْمَعِين

point of view the rules and regulations of Islam are such that they depend on a government and without which, Islam cannot remain alive. Because of this Imam 'Ali has referred to the Friday and congregational prayers being (ع) b. Musa al-Rida .conducted by the leader

In another statement he says: "If Allah had not placed a reliable and trustworthy leader amongst the people, the religion of Allah would surely have finished, the laws of Allah would have changed, innovations would have arisen in religion, irreligious people would have changed the faith of Allah and added and subtracted things from ".it, and doubts would have arisen about Islam amongst the Muslims

For this very reason it was well known amongst the Muslims, and even amongst the non-Muslims, that Islam has a specific system of government and that the in Medina was a clear example of such a (ص) government of the Noble Prophet .system

In the year ۱۳۴۳ ah, 'Ali 'Abd al-Razzaq, in his book Islam and the Principles of Government, denied the Prophetic government and claimed that the Prophet was simply a prophet sent by Allah (awj) to the scholars of the world (ص) Muhammad and that he in no way took steps towards the formation of a government. He did this at a time when Kamal Ataturk rejected the government of the Ottomans and laid the .foundations of his secular government

At the same time in Egypt, the followers of the caliphate chose Sultan Fuad as the leader of

the Muslims and placed him in the seat of power. The fact that these events occurred concurrently shows that ‘Abd al-Razzaq was influenced by the secular thoughts of the West and wrote these matters by taking inspiration from the writings of secular philosophers and political scientists.

‘Abd al-Razzaq claimed two things:

1. What the Noble Prophet (ص) established in Medina was not a government.

2. What was set up in Medina was not religious.

In order to prove the first point he places emphasis on the fact that what the Noble Prophet (ص) created in Medina did not have any of the qualities of a government.

In order to prove the second point he says that the degree and stature of Prophethood spurns politics and government.

In order to answer the first point we must pay attention to the fact that the consequence of holding that a specific form of government should be the standard by which we judge if something is a government or not would be that none of the nations of the past have ever had any governments.

Therefore a more general definition of government must be given so that it can be true for various forms of government. Such a definition can be put in the following way: Government is a collection of organized powers that has as its duty the management of the affairs of society. In this definition, government is comprised of various governmental structures like the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of

.government

(ص) According to this definition of government then, that which the Noble Prophet created in Medina was a government in the real sense of the word since he created an organized power structure that had as its responsibility the management of the affairs of society. From the time of the Prophet until now, many books have been .written regarding the management system of his government

Now when we pay attention to the following points, the religious nature of the :Prophet's government will become clear

The rules and regulations of Islam are such that without a government, they cannot .۱ be implemented; for example rulings pertaining to the executive, judicial, or monetary .systems of Islam

We have proofs to show that the rule and running of the affairs of society are the .۲ .(ص) prerogative of the Noble Prophet

If Prophethood were really at odds with government then why would the Noble .۳ take steps towards the creation of a government? Why would he waste (ص) Prophet his time and energy in this regard? If it were asked that does this "misappropriation" (ص) of effort not show irresponsibility, it would be answered that the Noble Prophet .started this work for the propagation of religion and in order to fulfil his apostleship

This answer shows the interrelationship of religion and politics from one point of view. Of course it does not answer the question as to why he himself took the establishment of religion into his own hands, while he could

easily have placed the responsibility in the hands of some other reliable friend like .(ع) Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib

In any case, we can really only understand and criticize what ‘Abd al-Razzaq wrote over ۷۰ years ago—something existing in its various forms in the Muslim world today —when we examine the context and culture in which this thought took shape, viz. the West. In order to understand the philosophy and culture of the West, we must have a look–though cursory–at the history of Christian thought that forms the cultural matrix .of the Western world

Question ۴۷: Relationship between governance of a jurist and the authority of a jurist

point

Question: What is the relationship between governance of a jurist (wilayat al-faqih) ?(and authority in jurisprudence (marja’iyat

Brief Answer

Wilayat is a part of marja’iyat in the culture of the Shi’as. The great maraji’ not only guided people with respect to the divine Law, but they also led people in the particular problems of society—even judging between people in particular matters and domestic disputes. But if we separate the two matters and associate the former with :marja’iyyat then a number of questions arise

?Is it permissible to separate marja’iyyat and wilayat .۱

If we suppose that it is permissible, then is it possible to have multiple mara’ji and .۲ ?leaders

If it be possible to separate the marji’ and the leader, is it possible to follow other .۳ ?than the leader in rules relating to society and the individual

The answers to the aforementioned questions are as follows: The reason that the jurisprudent is an authority in matters of the

law is because of his specialization in jurisprudence and his power to derive the rules of Allah (awj) from their sources. While the reason that a leader is what he is, is because aside from the above mentioned qualities, he has the ability to manage society according to the principles and values of Islam. It is because of this that it becomes possible for a person to be chosen as a leader due not so much to his aptitude in jurisprudence as much as to his better management skills.

In lieu of this reality, the separation of the offices of the marji' and the leader becomes a reasonable, and in some instances, a necessary expedient.

In principle, leadership is confined to a single person, whereas the marja'iyyat is applicable to numerous individuals. But the possibility for the reverse situation also holds; just as does the possibility that the two offices should be combined in a single individual. Since following the orders of the leader is obligatory upon all people—including other jurisprudents—and it is forbidden to disobey his orders, hence it is not possible for people to follow other than the leader in matters related to the social order and the running of society.

What was said above regarding the authority of the jurisprudent was in reference to the individual order and to matters of a personal nature; it is in these matters that people can follow other than the leader.

Detailed Answer

The Noble Prophet (ص) of Islam had three mandates:

۱. To propagate

;Allah's (awj) message; teaching the laws of religion and guiding the people

;To judge between people when they differed .٢

.To lead and manage society .٣

All of these qualities and functions exist for the jurisprudents in the time of the :occultation of the Imam. They too have three functions

;Acting as judges and resolving disputes that arise between people .١

Giving edicts in law and expounding the general rules of the Divine law for the .٢ ;people. This can be considered a type of guidance of the people

.Leadership .٣

Wilayat is a part of marja'iyat in the culture of the Shi'as. The great maraji' not only guided people with respect to the divine Law, but they also led people in the particular problems of society—even judging between people in particular matters and domestic disputes. But if we separate the two matters and associate the former with :marja'iyyat then a number of questions arise

Is it permissible to separate marja'iyyat and wilayat? In other words is it possible .١ that one individual is the one people refer to in the general matters of the law while ?another person is the leader of the Islamic nation

If we suppose that it is permissible, then is it possible to have multiple maraji' and .٢ ?leaders? Is there a difference between them in this regard

If it be possible to separate the marji' and the leader, is it possible to follow other .٣ ?than the leader in rules relating to society and the individual

Before we answer the aforementioned questions it

.is necessary for us to give a brief explanation of the "edict" that the leader issues

When the jurisprudent refers to the religious sources in order to obtain the general rule of Allah (awj) regarding a certain problem and uses the special techniques that exist for obtaining the rules of the Law, it is called giving an edict or "fatwa."

When the leader pays attention to the general rules of Allah (awj), the various systems in Islam, and the conditions of the time, and according to these delineates a person's or a specific group's responsibility with regards to a certain matter, this is called giving an order or a "hukm". In doing this, he not only pays attention to the general rules of Islam and the lofty aspirations of the religion, but also to the specific .conditions that exist in that time

As long as those conditions exist, the order issued by him or his representative is binding. Of course from the point of view of the Law, the rules of Allah (awj) and the edicts of the jurisprudent who has all the necessary qualifications are also binding, just like the rulings of the leader, but with this difference that the jurisprudent's rulings are binding on him and his followers only, while everyone must follow the .orders of the leader

With this in mind we will now answer the first question, in other words the separation of the marja'iyyat and the leader. According to the logic of the "leadership of

the jurisprudent" and its proofs, the jurisprudent takes upon himself the management of society and in accordance with the values of Islam, he takes on the responsibility of leadership. But marja'iyyat means simply to issue an edict and is a completely different matter. In order to understand marja'iyyat it is necessary to explain taqlid .first

In the Persian language, taqlid means to follow someone without a proof. Taqlid in the parlance of jurisprudence means that someone follows a specialist in a specific matter that is in line with his specialty. The first meaning is considered bad in the eyes of all sane people, but the second is totally sound and accepted by them. The most important proof as to the permissibility of taqlid lies in the fact that the person who is not a specialist in a particular field must refer to the specialist of that field. All of the proofs that are contained in the traditions and verses of the Qur`an regarding taqlid ,point to this very fact. Like for example the verse that says

We did not send [any apostles] before you except as men to whom We revealed—" (ask the People of the Reminder if you do not know."(١

With this explanation it becomes clear that the reason that the jurisprudent is an authority in matters of the law is because of his specialization in jurisprudence and his power to derive the rules of Allah (awj) from their sources while the reason that a leader is what he is, is

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١ - Surat al-Nahl, (١۶), verse ۴٣: وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلاَّ رِجَالاً نُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ

because aside from the aforementioned qualities, he has the ability to manage .society according to the principles and values of Islam

It is because of this that it becomes possible for a person to be chosen as a leader due not so much to his aptitude in jurisprudence as much as to his better management .skills

In lieu of this reality, the separation of the offices of the marji' and the leader .becomes a reasonable, and in some instances, necessary expedient

With regards to the second question (i.e. whether the leadership and the marja'iyyat is confined to one person or is open to more than one person) and assuming that a separation of the two is possible, we must remember that when someone refers to the marji' he does so because the marji' is a specialist in the field of law and the one who refers, is not. This being the case, it is possible that there be numerous specialists in society. Moreover, this is something that is to be sought after so that everyone can .refer to them with ease and obtain their rulings

But the leadership of society, because it is tied up with the order of society and because the multiplicity of centres of decision making would cause a disturbance–since it is necessary for everyone to follow the leader in his rulings–dictate that the leader be one. This is especially true because according to Islam there is only one nation of Islam. Of course it is possible

that specific conditions dictate that specific areas have their own leaders, but all of these leaders should cooperate with one another. But it is not necessary that various jurisprudents issue one edict in order that society not be disturbed. Rather, every jurisprudent issues his edict according to his judgment and the general rules of .deriving the laws from their sources

In principle, leadership is confined to a single person, whereas the marja'iyyat is applicable to numerous individuals. But the possibility for the reverse situation also .holds true

As to the third question (i.e. the possibility of following someone other that the leader in all matters) we must not lose sight of the fact that when the leader issues an order or a ruling he looks at all aspects of the situation from the perspective of the various systems and realms within Islam, and after such an appraisal and due to his position it .is his opinion which has the final say

If it were permissible for people to follow other than the leader in all matters, while the orders of the leader remain binding upon them, then in certain cases this would lead to a serious problem. In other words, it is possible that in a specific matter of social order the leader could issue an edict and say that if my ruling was other than this I would have said so, while on the other hand the marji' of the people could issue a ruling other than his. In this situation

?how can we expect the people to follow the edict of the ruler

It is with regards to this problem that it seems necessary that people do not follow other than the leader in social and state matters, since to disobey his order is forbidden according to all the jurisprudents. Therefore what was said above regarding the authority of the jurisprudent and marji' was in reference to the individual order and to matters of a personal nature; it is in these matters that people .can follow other than the leader

(Question ۴۸: Legal imitation of a Jurist (mujtahid

point

?Question: What do the terms "marja'iyyah" and "taqlid" mean

Brief Answer

Marja'iyyah is a legal term that means "the issuance of a legal ruling (fatwa)." Conceptually, it is coupled with the term taqlid (legal imitation) which denotes "the referral of one who holds no specialty in jurisprudence to a specialized jurist to seek his opinion in legal matters." Keeping in mind that a non-specialist must always refer .to a specialist in issues requiring expertise, such legal imitation is indeed logical

Detailed Answer

Marja'iyyah literally means "to be a source of reference (ruju')." In Islamic jurisprudential jargon, it is a legal term that means "the issuance of a legal ruling (fatwa)," since one who issues a legal ruling serves as a source of reference for lay people in legal matters. It is coupled with the term taqlid (legal imitation), in such a way that if one person is a marja' (one who issues legal rulings), others are considered muqallidin (those who imitate his legal rulings). For

this reason, in order to explain the term marja'iyyah, we must begin by explaining the .term taqlid

In Islamic jurisprudence, taqlid is "the referral of one who holds no specialty in jurisprudence to a specialized jurist to seek his opinion in legal matters." Referring to experts in such a way is a logical course of action. In fact, the strongest argument supporting the legality of taqlid is the conventional wisdom that non-specialists must always refer to specialists in matters concerning their field of specialty. Any textual evidence that can be cited from the Qur`an (such as the verse that says: "Ask the experts if you do not know"(١)) or from the ahadith simply reinforce this logical .principle

A qualified jurisprudent (faqih) therefore is considered a marji' because of his .expertise in deriving legal rulings from the sources of Islamic law

Question ۴۹: Difference between hukm and fatwa

point

Question: What do the terms "Hukm" and "Fatwa" signify? What is the difference ?between the two

When a mujtahid derives a legal ruling concerning a given issue by referring to the sources of Islamic law (the Qur`an, the sunnah, ijma' (consensus), and 'aql (the intellect)) using the methodology of ijtihad (juristic interpretation), the ruling which he ascertains is called a fatwa. Thus, a fatwa is a universally applicable religious law (concerning a particular issue.(٢

However, when the mujtahid takes into account the general principles of divine law, the specific system in place in his country, and prevailing conditions, and issues a legal ruling for all people, a specific contingency, or an individual, such

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١- □ Surat al-Nahl (١۶), Verse ۴٧: أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلى تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَؤُفٌ رَحِيمٌ □

۲- Imam Khumayni referred to these methods as the “traditional jurisprudence.”

a ruling is called a hukm. In this way, a hukm, while taking into account general Islamic principles, values, and goals, also looks to the specific conditions of a people. .Therefore, such a ruling remains in place as long as those conditions prevail

From the divine perspective, obedience of both a fatwa and a hukm is obligatory.(۱) The only difference in this regard is that a fatwa is only legally binding on the mujtahid who issues it and his muqallid (one who imitates his rulings), while the hukm is binding .on all groups or individuals enumerated in the hukm

Brief Answer

A fatwa is a universally applicable religious law concerning a particular issue that is derived from the four sources of Islamic law (the Qur`an, the sunnah, ijma' (consensus), and 'aql (the intellect)) using the methodology of ijtihad (juristic .(interpretation

A hukm on the other hand, is a law issued by a qualified mujtahid (jurist) who is the head of an Islamic government. Such a leader, by keeping in mind the general principles of divine law, the Islamic systems(۲), and prevailing conditions, issues a .hukm (legal ruling) for all people, a specific contingency, or an individual

From the divine perspective, obedience of both a fatwa and a hukm is obligatory. The only difference in this regard is that a fatwa is only legally binding on the mujtahid who issues it and his muqallid (one who imitates his rulings), while the hukm is binding .on all groups or individuals enumerated in the hukm

Detailed Answer

Question ۵۰: Religious Pluralism and different Interpretations of Religion

point

:Question

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١ – Islamic laws are, thus, divided into two categories: "divine laws," which refer to practical religious laws or "fatwa," and "authoritative laws," which pertain to the orders or "hukm" issued by the leader.

٢ – For every aspect of human life, Islam has put forth a set of universal institutions. Taken together, these institutions, in all their aspects, form a structure or "system," which works towards the objectives that are based on Islamic principles. Thus, the "Islamic economic system" is the set of universal institutions applying to the aspects of economics.

Please explain what religious pluralism is and the difference between it and the .interpretations of religion

Pluralism is multiplicity. It has different meanings in the philosophy of religion, ethics, law, political science, etc. The common factor that holds true for all of these is to acknowledge multiplicity or plurality in contrast to unity or exclusivism. Religious pluralism means that felicity is not exclusively reserved for a particular religion or religious sect. Truth and felicity not being limited to a specific religion in its turn means that all religions have a certain amount of truth to them. As a result, following the laws of any of them can be a means for man to reach felicity and to gain salvation. The Acceptance of this viewpoint means that the battle of truth and falsehood that exists between religions ceases to exist. The enmity and war that we find between religions .gives way to peace and solidarity

Brief Answer

۱ . Pluralism is multiplicity. It has different meanings in the philosophy of religion, ethics, law, political science, etc. The common factor that is true for all of these is to acknowledge multiplicity and plurality as opposed to unity or exclusivism. Religious pluralism means that felicity is not exclusively reserved for a particular religion or .religious sect

۲. Pluralism can conceivably be applied between various religions or between different .sects of one religion

۳. From the point of view of Islam, religious pluralism is incorrect because we have clear proofs that Islam is the true religion and that the

other religions cannot be on par with it. Also, the fact that the Noble Qur`an has not been tampered with and that Islam is the final and conclusive religion effectively .amounts to the abrogation of the religions predating Islam

۴. The various interpretations of religion or “religious hermeneutics” is another branch of religious research. The followers of this school believe in the validity and effectiveness of all the presuppositions of every interpreter of religion when he attempts to understand a sacred text. In the various modern interpretations of religion there are numerous perspectives, the most important of which are held by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, and Hans-Georg .Gadamer

۵. Even though the discussion of religious hermeneutics is a modern discussion in the philosophy of religion and was taken from the West, the fact remains that in depth discussions on the interpretation of sacred texts has a long history in the Islamic .sciences, especially in the field of Usul

۶. In the aforementioned schools and areas of research, not enough importance has been placed on the principles by which we can truthfully judge the validity of the different interpretations of religion. In reality, this leads to a form of relativism in .understanding

۷ . Religious hermeneutics and religious pluralism are properly two separate categories, but hermeneutics can be seen to be one of the instances of religious pluralism and hence the bridge which links the two topics. In other words, we can explain the multiplicity of religions because it is possible that we can

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understand one thing in many different ways

The objection that can be levied against this view is that one cannot judge every .۸ interpretation to be correct. It cannot be denied that the understanding of human beings follows the rules of speech and conversation. While attempting to understand a text there are principles that are to be used such as: paying attention to the meaning of the speaker or writer, the system of words he is using, the language that he speaks, his attitude while speaking, his seriousness or his joviality, and the fact .that he has definitely intended certain meanings from his text

Detailed Answer

A Brief History of Religious Pluralism

Religious Pluralism was first born in the Christian world and in the last ten years was .(presented and propagated by John Hick (۱۹۹۲

Religious pluralism can be considered between various religions in the sense that we consider them all to be true, or at least to all contain some element of truth. Or within any particular religion, various sects can be considered to be valid. For example, the Shi'ite and Sunni sects are two sects within the fold of Islam—each claiming to be the pure Islam. But from the point of view of religious pluralism, both of these groups can be valid, or it can be said that both sects contain some truth to them. In other words .religious pluralism can be divided into inter-religious and intra-religious pluralism

:The intellectual foundations of religious pluralism can be delineated as follows

The differentiation between the kernel and the shell of .۱

religion—giving prominence to the kernel of religion, to the detriment of the shell. In this regards, the teachings, especially the mannerisms and the exoteric rituals, are .usually considered to be the shell of religion

This interpretation lays great emphasis on "revelatory" and religious experiences .۲ and, in principle, sums up religion as religious experience. Religious experience is naturally always different when it is being formally related or interpreted. This is because on the level of forms, various factors such as culture and intellectual perspectives come into play. In the end, the multiplicity of religions becomes a reflection of some common type of religious experience as it is seen through the .mirror of various cultures

This interpretation is a humanistic one. It holds that religions should stick to down to .۳ earth realities that are common instead of laying stress on matters of sublime .doctrine; they should keep the latter for themselves

All religions have one message and with a little analysis, the differences between .۴ them disappear. In reality, the differences between religions arise from the .differences of interpretations and languages, and are not real

This phenomenon is based on the difference between the "truth in itself" and the .۵ "truth as it appears to us." In reality, there is an objective truth, but we do not have a perfect understanding of it. Yet the "truth as it appears to us" is a manifestation of this objective reality. The coming into contact of this [non-delimited] divine reality with [limited] man has meant that

it has taken on different forms depending upon the differing conditions of man .through the ages and in various cultures

Aside from this, Allah (awj) has, in order to create an effective relationship, made his message to conform to the inner workings of every culture and era. It should not be forgotten that many serious objections could be levied against the aforementioned view, even though some of them (like the first) can be interpreted in such a way as to make it correct. For a more in depth and fuller explanation of the above, we suggest .referring to the relevant books

This explanation is a hermeneutical one. It is based on the belief that the .۶ presuppositions of every interpreter have a pivotal effect on his attempts to understand a sacred text. According to this viewpoint, the writer and the speaker are just like the interpreter–after the writer finishes the composition of a text he gives up .his status as writer

This view says that the text in itself does not have any meaning; rather it is the interpreter that gives meaning to the text by means of his presuppositions and his knowledge. To put it differently, the meaning that resides in any text is much like wax from which the mind of the interpreter forms different shapes according to his predisposition and mental acumen. So, the texts are not pregnant with meanings, rather they are, so to speak, hungry for meaning. It is the interpreters and the listeners that

.give meaning to texts

The sixth viewpoint is the common denominator between religious pluralism and the .hermeneutics of religious texts. It has some valid objections that we will now refer to

The system of man's understanding follows the laws of discourse and conversation. All sane people of the world follow those principles when conversing with one another. The following are principles of conversation: paying attention to the meaning of the speaker or writer, the system of words he is using, the language that he is speaking, his attitude while speaking, his seriousness or his joviality, and the fact that he has definitely intended certain meanings from his text. They are all principles that rational .people use when speaking

Even people who hold to the "interpretation" hypothesis outlined above cannot deny using these principles themselves. Of course when a text gives news of something, one must, according to the clues and the meanings of the words, strive to understand it. Also, because religious texts have abrogated laws, general and particular statements, unconditional and conditional sentences, etc. we must carefully examine .the beginnings and the ends of each and every text before coming to a conclusion

Therefore, in attempting to understand a text, certain presuppositions exist, like knowing the language of the speaker and the context, but there are also some presuppositions that prevent the listener from understanding it and one must stay .away from those if one wants to understand the text

A Review of Religious Pluralism

Aside from all the objections that can be raised against

religious pluralism, one must not forget that according to us Muslims there are various sound proofs for the validity and truthfulness of Islam. With these proofs one cannot claim that all religions are equal. Some of these proofs are as follows: the reasonable nature of the teachings of Islam, the fact that Islamic texts are backed up by references, the un-tampered nature of the Noble Book of Muslims, the miraculous nature of the Qur`an, the comprehensiveness of the laws and their positive and .practical nature

Aside from these proofs a point that must not be lost sight of is the fact that Islam conclusively follows all previous religions. This is tantamount to the abrogation of the .preceding religions

The Various Interpretations of Religion

The various interpretations of religion or "religious hermeneutics" is another branch of religious research. The followers of this school believe in the validity and effectiveness of all the presuppositions of every interpreter of religion when he attempts to understand a sacred text. In the various modern interpretations of religion there are :numerous perspectives, the most important of which will be briefly outlined below

۱. The view of Friedrich Schleiermacher: Hermeneutics is a method for interpreting religious texts and helps avoiding misunderstandings that may arise from the time .separating the interpreter and the text itself

۲. The view of Wilhelm Dilthey: Hermeneutics is a theory used in the human sciences in contrast to the natural sciences. He believes that history interferes in the .interpretation of an interpreter

۳. The view of Martin Heidegger: Hermeneutics makes clear

the essence and nature of understanding and its conditions. He changed hermeneutics from a method to a philosophy (or the knowledge of being). Based on a theory relating to existence, he took hermeneutics to be the exposition of the quiddity and essence of understanding and its conditions.

۴. The view of Hans-Georg Gadamer: Hermeneutics is the [study of the] confluence of different levels and perspectives. He presented the ontology of Heidegger as an epistemology and thereby established an "ontology of understanding." The hermeneutics of Gadamer is for the most part an exposition of the process of the realization of understanding and has no concern with the correctness or incorrectness of understanding.

According to him, the mind of the interpreter is filled with beliefs and information that define his perspective. This perspective always moves along with the interpreter and changes or reaches an equilibrium as he continues to refer to the world and the things in it. The act of interpretation is the confluence of various perspectives and horizons of knowledge within the interpreter; it is the connection of these "horizons" and perspectives with one another.

The job of hermeneutics is to unite these perspectives and horizons and to create a dialogue between the interpreter and the text. What causes differences between various interpretations is the emphasis that is put upon certain presuppositions and horizons of thought over others. According to Gadamer, there is no one absolute viewpoint that could comprehend and embrace all possible perspectives.

Rather every act of interpretation

is a specific perspective in itself. Therefore an unbiased and objective interpretation is not possible and an all-inclusive, definitive interpretation just does not exist. In reality, according to Gadamer, it is not important to discover the "real" intentions of the writer, because in the end, we cannot know the text to be a true representation of the mind of the writer.

A Review of Gadamer

We will now briefly allude to some objections that can be raised against Gadamer, seeing as his views have had more of an effect and have been used in theological and philosophical discussions quite often in recent years, and are therefore more important.

۱. Why should we not pay attention to the intent of the writer? Should not the interpreter strive to differentiate between the predispositions of his own understanding and that of the writer?

۲. Gadamer's perspective leads to a sort of relativism, blurring or removing the distinction between correct and incorrect understanding. This is a kind of relativism that resembles that of Kant.

۳. We can question the universality of Gadamer's view and we can go on to hold that it is possible to avoid the effects of certain presuppositions and prejudgments.

۴. If every understanding needs certain presuppositions, then in their turn those presuppositions are not exceptions to this rule; and this leads logically to an infinite or circular regress of presuppositions.

Some Points Worth Mentioning Regarding The Different Interpretations Of Religion

Until now we have explained hermeneutics and the different interpretations of religion, and we have also touched upon the different views regarding it. We have especially covered

the viewpoints of Gadamer, mainly due to the fact that they had a far-reaching effect on his contemporaries. In order to complete the discussion we will remind our readers :of certain important points

First, although the subject of different interpretations of religion has largely been taken from modern philosophical hermeneutics, it should be noted that the discussion on the interpretation and understanding of religion has a long history in the Islamic sciences. This is especially the case in the fields of usul, Qur`anic commentary, and theoretical mysticism. Hence, the different kinds of intellectual, textual, symbolic, and mystical commentaries of the Qur`an, the commentary of the Qur`an by the Qur`an, the commentary by one's own opinion, semantics, and the method of obtaining the apparent meaning of the words of a text, all serve to show the presence of this .perspective in traditional Islamic scholarship

Secondly, since the religious texts played an important part in shaping the culture of Muslims and in the formation of the different Islamic sciences, it is possible to say that investigations into the method of interpreting religious texts play a pivotal role in theological discussions. It is largely due to this that the arguments surrounding the .different interpretations of religion have provoked much debate in this area

Most of the views that have been put forward by Arab and non-Arab intellectuals in recent years have been for the most part borrowed from the hermeneutic philosophy of Gadamer. These intellectuals have tried to use the hermeneutic philosophy and methodology in

the interpretation of the Noble Qur`an and the traditions, and in trying to understand :religion in general. Some of their views in this regard can be summed up as follows

.Religion and the religious texts are quiet and do not speak to us .۱

The presuppositions of interpreters have an effect in their interpretations of the .۲ .texts

.No interpreter can grasp the essence of any religion .۳

There is no one pure perspective. Rather we all use interpretations that are .۴ .mixtures of truth and falsehood

The third point is this: In the view of many of the thinkers mentioned above, no importance should be given to principles by which we can judge the various interpretations of religion. No effort is exerted towards separating the incorrect readings from the correct ones. In other words, according to this stance, all the .different understandings are equal

On the contrary and in line with the religious principles and viewpoints that are still prevalent in the traditional world, any interpreter must strive to separate the predispositions of his thought from that of the author of the text. He must strive to correct his line of thought and achieve a concordance with the intentions of the writer by using certain principles. If he does not do this, his views will lead not only to the relativity of the understanding of religion but also to the relativity of the methodology .of understanding

According to the views of Islamic scholars, the different understandings of religious statements are an unavoidable phenomena but

this difference of understanding is a matter that is regulated by certain principles and .laws, many of which have been clearly enunciated by the religious tradition itself

The fourth and final point: According to what we have just said, the thought of the followers of religious hermeneutic philosophy and the different interpretations of religion revolves around the interpreter and sees him to be central. While on the other hand, the view of Islamic scholars revolves around the author and they attempt to find his original intentions (in the case of religion, the author is either Allah or one whom He sends). In this approach, the interpreter looks through the text—the Qur`an or the traditions—to the intentions of the author, allowing it to be called a "text centred" approach. It aims at revealing the intentions of the author or speaker as correctly as possible and uses all the means that can possibly assist him in this .regard

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About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism- places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,- web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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Introduction of the Center – Ghaemiyeh Digital Library